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ABSTRACT

Interrelationships among policy issues facing education in 1978 and 1979 are explored in this paper. The policy issues covered are based on over 1,000 concerns raised during an issue identification project that involved reviewing documents and interviewing educators. These concerns were sorted into categories in a process that led inductively to a model of the events in education systems that generate statements of concern. That is, an event in one issue area will generate concerns affecting policy in another area, and these new concerns may be voiced in several forms. None of the issues is isolated; all either affect or are affected by others. The specific concepts addressed in this report consist sometimes of single issue areas and sometimes of clusters of issue areas forming a larger concept area. The single or multiple concept areas covered are educational finance, equal educational opportunity, the loss of public confidence, the accountability movement, and the erosion of local control. Figures and tables demonstrate the relationships among issue areas and identify the concerns addressed. Appendixes provide an overview of the policy issue identification process and a report on the results of the concern-seeking interviews with educational policy makers. (PGD)

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Technical Report No. 10

Issues in Elementary and Secondary Education, 1978-1979

Darlene F. Russ-Eft
David P. Rubin
Rachel E. Holmen

Prepared by

SAGE
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS GROUP IN EDUCATION

For the

National Center for Education Statistics

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American Institutes for Research

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TECHNICAL REPORT NO. 10

ISSUES IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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February 1980

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BACKGROUND

As part of the Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380), Congress transferred the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from the Office of Education (OE) to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education (ASE). At the same time, the purpose of NCES was established:

> [to] (1) collect, collate, and from time to time, report full and complete statistics on the conditions of education in the United States; (2) conduct and publish reports on specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; (3) assist state and local education agencies in improving and automating their statistical and data collection activities; and (4) review and report on education activities in foreign countries.

The range of NCES data collection, analysis, and reporting efforts consistent with this statement of purpose is extremely broad. Yet the Center's limited budget allows only a fraction of those efforts to be undertaken. The value of NCES' contribution to the education policymaking process depends, in part, upon how well the Center's planners anticipate the information needs of policymakers when choosing what data to collect, analyze, and report.

To enhance its ability to gather relevant data, perform critical analyses, and thereby provide educational policymakers with needed information in a timely fashion, NCES has sought to develop a systematic approach for the identification of current and emerging educational policy issues. As a first step in the development of this system, the Washington Office of the College Entrance Examination Board assisted the Center by preparing a comprehensive review of issues and data needs in postsecondary education (Christoffel & Rice, 1975). The Educational Testing Service continued this work for the Center (Wild, Fortna, & Knapp, 1978). In 1978, NCES requested assistance from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to extend the effort to include elementary and secondary education; this was under-

taken as part of the work of AIR's Statistical Analysis Group in Education (SAGE).

In responding to the NCES request, AIR staff developed and implemented an issue identification approach. This approach entailed (1) reviewing selected documents and periodicals in which policy issues are raised, employing a systematic procedure for extracting and reformatting issue statements found in these materials (see Appendix A for a description of this procedure) and (2) interviewing key persons involved in education policymaking. The latter process also helped to determine which documents and periodicals should be reviewed (see Appendix B for a report on these interviews). Further interviews will be undertaken with policymakers to verify the criteria for identifying the most important issues to be addressed.

OVERVIEW

The issue identification procedure, as applied during 1978-79, produced more than a thousand statements of concern about aspects of the education system. They varied considerably in specificity and focus. Some expressed general discontent with the quality of educational services, while others offered explanations of particular troubling conditions or proposed solutions to troubling conditions. Many of the issue statements gathered from different documents were identical, and many of the issue statements were closely intertwined.

In order to provide a coherent and parsimonious summary of these concerns, it was necessary to develop issue categories and report only the critical concerns within each of the categories. The process of sorting issues into areas of "related concerns" led inductively to a model of events in the education system that generated statements of concern. A relatively small number of classes of events underlie the majority of concerns expressed about the education system (e.g., teacher strikes, reports of declining test scores, the passage of state-level tax limiting initiatives).

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among the classes of events that were identified. By referring to this diagram, we see that very few educational issues can be considered in isolation. For example, reports of declining test scores lead to a loss of public confidence in the education system, which leads, in turn, to public pressure on those responsible for education policy to make school personnel more accountable for the quality of education services. Policies that may result from such pressure include the use of competency tests for teacher selection, the use of competency tests as a basis for deciding whether to promote or credential students, and the "back to basics" movement to ensure that poor student performance on exams in basic skills is not caused by neglect in teaching basic skills.

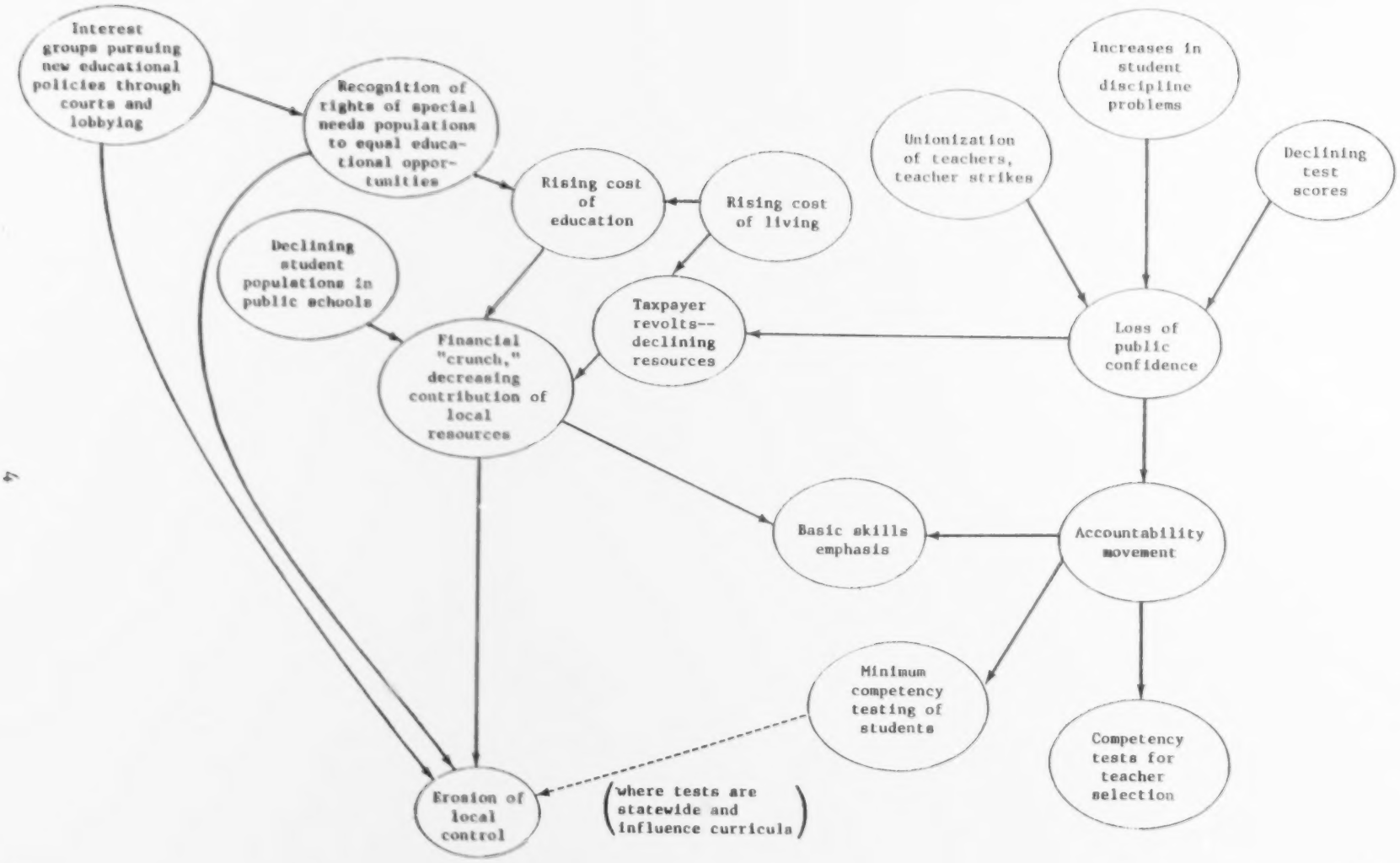

Interest groups pursuing new educational policies through courts and lobbying
Recognition of rights of special needs populations to equal educational opportunities
Rising cost of education
Rising cost of living
Declining student populations in public schools
Financial "crunch," decreasing contribution of local resources
Taxpayer revolts--declining resources
Unionization of teachers, teacher strikes
Increases in student discipline problems
Declining test scores
Loss of public confidence
Basic skills emphasis
Accountability movement
Minimum competency testing of students
Competency tests for teacher selection
Erosion of local control
(where tests are statewide and influence curricula)

Figure 1. Relationships among classes of events in the education system that generate the majority of issue statements.

As another example, the failure to pass a school bond may raise concern over anticipated reductions of school services and possible declines in the overall quality of education in a school district. Those who have come to value services for particular kinds of students may voice more specific reservations, perhaps anticipating cutbacks in remedial programs as school services are pruned to an affordable core. They may claim that the effects of cutbacks will be inequitable, reducing services that affect the educationally disadvantaged more than others. Others may suggest that such inequities can be avoided if state and federal funds are secured to underwrite the cost of threatened services. If so, new issues will be raised. A transfer in support for services from the local to the state or federal level is often coupled with a transfer of some control over the form those services will take. This point may be raised by those who fear that, as local citizens lose authority to make decisions about school services, local administrative efficiency will decrease. In this way, a single event in the class that we have called "taxpayer revolt" can lead to the generation of many different issue statements, as individuals with varying interests in the education system anticipate potentially undesirable effects of the event.

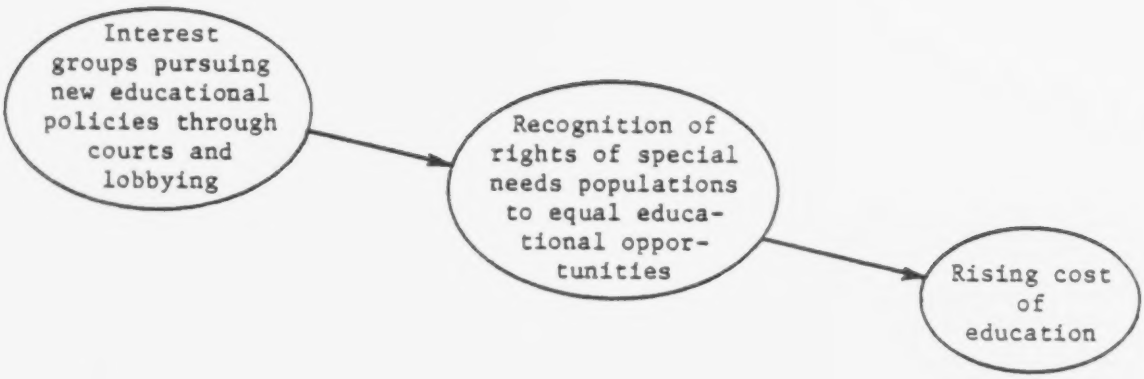
Identifying and recognizing this overlap and interrelationship among classes of events can assist in identifying critical information needs. For example, concerns about erosion of local control of education are based upon the recognition that such erosion represents a relatively new and fundamental shift in the distribution of power and authority within the education system. Such a fundamental change merits attention, for it is difficult to anticipate its effects upon the quality, equity, and efficiency of the system. To understand this trend attention must be paid to certain events. Among the most important are the increases in the number of well-organized interest groups agitating for particular educational policies through court litigation or state and federal lobbying, an increase in state and federal programmatic intervention at the local level to promote equality of educational opportunity, and the decreasing share of the cost of education contrib-

uted to school budgets by local taxpayers. Each of these is itself an important trend indicating a decline in local control, and information about each can inform discussion of many specific issues. Together, however, they form a multidimensional trend system; the interaction of the system components must be monitored in order to estimate the rate at which erosion of local control is likely to continue and the effects of policies on this erosion.

The discussion of issues in this paper is organized according to the event categories depicted in Figure 1, with the discussion focusing either on issues within a single event class or on issues related to a group of event classes. Relevant portions of the figure are reproduced throughout the paper.

It should be emphasized that Figure 1 is not a complete model of the education system. Such a model would be enormously complex, breaking each of the event classes into many more components, with additional event classes and many further interactions. For simplicity, the detail in the figure has been limited to that necessary for discussing issues that were salient during 1978-79. The events in the figure are based upon a systematic issue identification process. As such, we believe that they describe current processes in the education system generating the most pressing concerns and debate, and we expect that they will continue to do so for some time.

EDUCATIONAL FINANCE


Interest groups pursuing new educational policies through courts and lobbying
Recognition of rights of special needs populations to equal educational opportunities
Rising cost of education

As the result of various coalescing events and forces, such as declines in the student population, increases in the costs of educational services, and increases in fiscal conservatism among public officials and their constituents (e.g., taxpayer revolts), issues concerning educational finance have become highly salient. While local resources are decreasing, state and federal involvement in education is growing. Resulting changes in the relationships existing among federal, state, and local governments, especially regarding school finance, are generating numerous issues. These issues will require increasing attention as the federal policy role in financing education is elaborated, and they imply a substantial need for new information.

Two specific areas of concern can be distinguished among educational finance issues. The first issue area raises questions regarding the general problem of rising costs and declining resources for educational programs. The second issue area is that of federal involvement in school finance. Questions in this area focus on the role of federal aid to public and to private education. Each of these areas will now be discussed in turn.

Rising Costs and Declining Resources for Education

At the root of the growing interest in educational finance is the concern about rising costs in education as well as in other areas of life. Cost increases result, in part, from inflationary trends in the economy, although some claim that educational costs are rising above and beyond mere inflation. This is a critical issue area for educational policy, because public education depends upon the public's willingness to pay for these services. Certainly, information is needed regarding trends and projections of educational costs. In addition, information is needed concerning the effects of variation in financing on educational services and outcomes. Without such information, the goals of equity and efficiency will be unattainable.

The greatest share of the education budget, 85%, continues to be allocated to the costs of personnel (Chambers, 1979). However, increases in energy costs are beginning to stretch already tight budgets to the breaking point. As the cost of oil, gas, and electricity increases and resources for education become scarcer, the costs of heating and lighting school buildings and transporting students become increasingly difficult to manage. At a recent meeting of the Council of Educational Facilities Planners, estimates were provided to illustrate soaring energy costs (see Education USA, October 30, 1978). The school building energy cost per student per year was estimated to be $20 in 1973. By 1978, it was estimated to have risen to $57, and the projection for 1985 was $280. In addition to high energy costs resulting from rising oil prices and energy inefficient school designs, the trend of urban flight and suburban school construction has resulted in the need to provide busing for three times the number of students as would have been otherwise necessary. The magnitude of the energy cost problem has led architects and administrators to consider school closings on cold days and during the winter (in place of summer vacations) as ways to reduce school energy consumption and cost.

The financing of public education suffers from the generally increasing cost of living and its effects on public choices. Indica-

tive of growing public unwillingness to accept the rising costs of public services, including education, are taxpayer revolts and demands for tax limitations (e.g., California's Proposition 13). The implications of particular forms of such limitations are currently being debated, with predicted consequences ranging from greater cooperation among related service agencies to greater centralization of control over those services. The likelihood that tax limitations will have important effects on educational institutions warrants monitoring of programs and services in the affected states. At the very least, in order to make rational decisions, taxpayers and policymakers need to know what the effects of particular actions will be on revenues and resources for education.

The complexity of school finance issues has been increased by the consideration of methods to equalize the distribution of educational resources across schools, school districts, and states. Congress recognized this complexity in its authorization of a large number of school finance research studies in the Education Amendments of 1978 (Section 1203). Examination of these issues is critical because allocation of funds depends upon the definition of equity that is employed. If the purpose is to create greater fiscal equity of one type within a state, the result may be less equity of another type. For example, "power equalization" and "foundation" plans ensure that districts that tax themselves at a higher rate will have greater finances available, in spite of the ratio of pupils to property values in the districts, but these plans do not ensure that each student in the state will receive equal educational resources. Thus, debate rages concerning what form of equity is appropriate (e.g., Hyman, 1977; Odden, 1978). At the same time, the push for tax limitation may conflict with the push for school finance reform, unless the equalization means less for everyone (or "equalizing downward"). This conflict brings into sharp focus the question of how to provide for greater equity in a time of diminishing resources.

Issues in this area were at the forefront of educational policy-makers' awareness during 1978-79. The belief was widespread that the nation's educational system is entering an era of change from the many decades' steady expansion of public school budgets. Now is the time for preparation of an integrated data base for guiding and evaluating policy responses to this problem area. Congress indicated its need for information in the Education Amendments of 1978, calling for extensive study of school finance. The availability of data to address issues in this area appears to be good--*if* the data from various sources proves to be valid and comparable across states. The Center has called upon SAGE to provide a test of that validity and comparability in carrying out its task of State Data Base Assessment.

Table 1

Issues about Rising Costs and Declining Resources

Issue 1: How serious is the current financial crisis facing the schools?

a. Have school costs increased more rapidly than inflation?
b. What is the relationship between revenue availability and demands for educational services?
c. Has federal support for education increased or decreased (in terms of per-pupil expenditures)?
d. Are citizens providing less support for education (in terms of the proportion of per-capita income given up in federal, state, and local taxes)?
e. Are the tax burdens of providing public services, including education, greater in cities than in other areas?
f. How much are rising energy costs contributing to the financial crisis? What techniques are most effective in reducing energy costs?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Costs* of educational resources (partitioned by types of resource, e.g., teachers, energy, transportation)	• National Institute of Education, Higher education prices and price indexes
• School district revenues from federal, state, and local tax sources	• Common Core of Data (CCD) Parts II, VII, VIII, and IX
• Services provided by amounts and types of school district revenues	• CCD Parts II, IV, and VIII
• Total tax revenues in the country by type of tax and the proportion of these revenues spent for education by level of government	• Statistics of state school systems; U.S. Department of Commerce, Governmental finances, Series GF (annual); U.S. Department of Commerce, Survey of current business
• Educational expenditures by type of expense, type of community, type of school, and numbers of students (or, cost of education index by type of community)	• CCD Parts VIII and IX
• Proportion of personal and family taxes collected locally in various forms used for education, by type of community	• U.S. Department of Commerce, Governmental finances
• Tax rates of cities with various demographic characteristics	• **
• Indicators of reductions in educational resources available to students, e.g., trends in staff/pupil ratios, number and kinds of courses offered, and total instructional time	• CCD Parts IV and VI; Survey of secondary school courses and enrollments
• Energy expenditures by schools	•
• Conservation measures employable by schools	•
• Revenues received for and costs incurred by categorical programs	• CCD Part VIII

(continued)

*All costs should be calculated in constant dollars adjusted to 1978 as a base year to correct for inflation.

**Data sources are not currently available for all data needs. In such cases, the space for the data source has been left blank.

Table 1 (cont.)

Issue 2: What is the prognosis for school financing in the future?

a. What will be the results of "taxpayer revolts" and spending limitations?
b. Why has the taxpayer revolt occurred?
c. Why have voters increasingly rejected additional support for education?
d. Is reliance on property taxes to support education a critical part of the current financial problem? Will a switch to an income tax base improve the situation?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Total tax revenues in the country by type of tax and the proportion of these revenues spent for education by level of government	• U.S. Department of Commerce, Governmental finances
• Trends in availability of future educational resources and services following initiation of spending limitations	•
• Public attitudes toward education	• American Institutes of Public Opinion (The Gallup Poll); National Opinion Research Center, Public Opinion Survey; Survey Research Service
• Enrollments at various levels in public schools	• CCD Part IV and VI-A
• Public school revenues from nonpublic sources	• CCD Part II
• Forecasts of costs of various educational resources (per unit)	• National Center for Education Statistics, Projections of education statistics
• Forecasts of the demand for various educational resources	• National Center for Education Statistics, Projections of education statistics
• Public attitudes toward various methods of taxation	• American Institute of Public Opinion (The Gallup Poll)

Issue 3: What are the implications of proposed school finance reform?

a. How equitable is the current distribution of educational resources and costs?
b. Will disparities be removed as a result of school finance reform?
c. Will the financial crisis be deepened or alleviated to any extent?
d. Are specific reform techniques, such as "power equalization," satisfactory to the courts?
e. Is school finance reform in conflict with special considerations for special needs populations?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Income and expenditures by school district	• Vincent, P. E., Current issues in school finance reform (1979);* Congressionally mandated studies of school finance (Section 1203 of P.L. 95-961)
• Simulation models of the impact of proposed reforms on school district resources	• Vincent, P.E., Current issues in school finance reform (1979); Congressionally mandated studies of school finance (Section 1203 of P.L. 95-961)
• Listing of court decisions on school finance reform	• Vincent, P. E., Current issues in school finance reform (1979); Congressionally mandated studies of school finance (Section 1203 of P.L. 95-961)

*A report discussing issues and suggesting data sources

Federal Involvement in School Finance

The basic question underlying much of the debate about educational finance at the federal level is: What should the federal role in financing elementary and secondary education be? Throughout the history of our country, education has traditionally been a local or state activity. The notion that the federal government should provide general aid to education continues to be rejected in favor of support for categorical aid programs targeted to populations with specific needs. (See Eidenberg and Morey [1969] for a further discussion of these points.) Nevertheless, the general feeling was expressed during the Committee hearings on the Education Amendments of 1978 that "now is the time to begin to think about the broader issue of how all of the federal government's aid to education programs fits within the overall scheme of our nation's education system" (House Report, Education and Labor Committee, No. 95-1137, May 1978). This call for a rethinking of the federal role in education is the result of general concern about the expansion of all federal social programs (e.g., a growing fiscal conservatism and the push for a balanced federal budget) and specific concern about educational programs (e.g., the provision of federal funds for the development of individualized programs for handicapped children). In addition, it expresses a growing recognition (e.g., Wise, 1977) that inefficiencies have arisen because the impact of the federal contribution to education is often in conflict with the state and local policies.

Debate continues as to the level and the form of federal aid that should be provided to public schools. Calls for increased federal support, because of declining local resources and because of increased needs (see report of Select Committee on Population, January 1979), are counterbalanced by calls for decreased federal involvement and support of education (see report of Paul Copperman's testimony before the Senate Education Subcommittee as described in Education Daily, February 14, 1979). Concerns continue to be raised as to the discrepancy between the intended purpose of federal funds (e.g., to supplement local and state programs) and the actual use of these funds (e.g., to

supplant local and state programs). A recent case involves the refusal by the state of New Mexico to accept federal funding under P.L. 94-142 for fear that "with the acceptance of federal dollars there will be fewer state dollars generated" (Education Daily, February 27, 1979). Finally, the past and present focus of federal funding in terms of categorical aid programs is being questioned. Proposals are being made to increase general aid to education or, at the very least, to reduce the number of regulations and requirements associated with these programs, thus giving states more discretion over the use of federal funds.

In real dollars, federal aid to education has declined over the past two years. Increases in federal aid to education are becoming more unlikely as the need for that aid is becoming more critical, and questions of the relationships among federal, state, and local funding are coming to the forefront. At the local level, funding for education has been declining for a variety of reasons: voter rejection of tax increases and school bonds, property tax yields that fail to keep pace with inflation, decreasing numbers of families with children in school, and so forth. The national trend of "taxpayer revolts," such as Proposition 13 in California, has exacerbated local funding problems. With decreases in local funding, there appears to be a trend toward an expansion in the state funding of education. In 1975-76, states supported 43.9% of the education bill, as compared with 47.3% from local sources and 8.8% from federal sources. In 1978-79, states will support 47.4% of the education bill, as compared with 43.8% from local sources and 8.8% from federal sources. As will be discussed in a later section, increased state funding of education may lead to the "problem" of a loss of local control of education. Decisions will need to be made regarding the roles of each level of government and the relationships that should exist among them.

Federal funding of private elementary and secondary education has been debated since federal funds were first made available for public education. Indeed, federal involvement in education was delayed

during the 1950s and 1960s because of questions of federal policy vis-a-vis private education (Eidenberg & Morey, 1969). Current debates center on proposals to provide support for private education through tuition tax credits and through voucher programs. With the increasing enrollment in (non-Catholic) private schools, concern has been expressed about the possible negative impact on public education of aid to private education. The concern is especially salient when the educational and social goals of private schools differ from those of public schools.

Many of the issues in this area are "old" issues that have been raised for 15 years but continue to be salient. The sensitivity of policy to findings on most of these issues may be questionable, depending on the ways in which program funding levels and regulations can be changed. Only in the nonpublic school area is congressional action imminent: one bill limiting IRS investigation of private school racial desegregation and the other bill authorizing tuition tax credits. The availability of data to address issues about the federal role is generally good, although there remains a substantial effort to integrate data from a variety of files into a unified data base for policy evaluation.

Table 2

Issues about the Federal Role in School Finance

Issue 1: What should the federal role be in financing elementary and secondary education?

a. What is the federal role at the present time?
b. What are the intended and unintended impacts of federal support to education?
c. What will result from increases or decreases in federal support?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Federal expenditures for elementary and secondary education by purpose	• National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of education statistics; Office of Management and Budget, Special analyses, budget of the United States; Social Security Administration, Office of Research and Statistics, Social welfare expenditures under public programs in the United States; ELSEGIS; CCD Parts II and VII
• Rates of use of federal educational funds at state and local levels	• CCD Part VII; Office of Education, Office of Evaluation and Dissemination, Uses of state-administered federal education funds
• Measures of the influence of federal support on (i) reporting and other accountability procedures at the state and local levels, (ii) content and emphasis in curricula, and (iii) teaching practices and materials used in the classroom	•
• Estimates of how accountability procedures, curricula, and teaching practices would change following various changes in the amount of federal support and associated requirements	•

Issue 2: What are the implications of providing general aid to education to reduce interstate disparities?

a. Will disparities in educational expenditures and services be reduced? What disparities would remain and why?
b. Will the overall tax burden among households be increased? Assuming that disparities can only be (feasibly) eliminated by increasing the aid to poorer states without decreasing the aid allotted to the other states, how much might such a program cost (i.e., how much would other social programs have to be decreased or taxes increased)? How would the cost be distributed among segments of the population (e.g., levels of income, private versus commercial, states, and regions)?
c. What would be the effects other than decreased interstate disparities (e.g., decreased intrastate disparities; increased bureaucracy, regulations, and reporting requirements; improved education on the average)?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Measures of the types and amounts of intrastate disparities in educational expenditures and services.	• CCD Parts IV, VIII, and IX
• Measures of the types and amounts of interstate disparities in educational services	• CCD Parts IV, VIII, and IX
• Estimated amount of federal funding required to decrease the existing interstate disparities to various levels and by various methods	•
• Estimates of which states would receive how much aid under alternative forms of the program	•
• Estimated effects of such a program on federal agencies, SEAs, LEAs, and educational expenditures within states	•
• Breakdown of all federal revenues (available to pay for such a program) by type of revenue, source of revenue, and characteristics of tax-payers; for sources that are not individuals or families, estimates of how the tax burden is shifted to the public	•
• Estimates of how the federal aid would be (or could be required to be) distributed within states, and the effects this would have on intrastate disparities	•

(continued)

Table 2 (cont.)

Issue 3: What are the implications of recent actions and proposals to change the ESEA Title I Funding allocations?

a. What will result from capping the state-operated programs at the 1979 levels?
b. What will result from increasing the funding of concentration grants?
c. What will result from allocating funds according to student test scores?
d. What will result from allocating funds according to the 1975 Survey of Income and Education figures?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Price indexes for educational inputs (e.g., teacher salaries, materials, equipment)	• National Institute of Education, Higher education prices and price indexes
• Number of eligible pupils under current allocation procedures	• Office of Education, Office of Evaluation and Dissemination, Annual evaluation report on programs administered by the U.S. Office of Education
• Characteristics of LEAs (e.g., size, type, and wealth of community), schools, and students (e.g., family income, ability levels, racial/ethnic group) currently benefiting from Title I funding.	• CCD Part VIII; Office of Education, Office of Evaluation and Dissemination, Annual evaluation report on programs administered by the U.S. Office of Education
• Characteristics of LEAs, schools, and students eligible if funds are allocated according to test scores	• CEMREL, Inc., ML-GROUP for Policy Studies in Education, Minority education 1960-1978: Grounds, gains and gaps, Vol. I
• Characteristics of LEAs, schools, and students eligible if funds are allocated according to the 1975 Survey of Income and Education figures	•
• Characteristics of LEAs, schools, and students eligible if more of the Title I funds were allocated to concentration grants	•

Issue 4: Are federal categorical funds being misused?

a. Are federal categorical funds supplanting rather than supplementing local and state funds?
b. Are ESEA Title I funds being used for general education?
c. Is there a failure to maintain comparability between Title I and nontarget schools (i.e., local funding should be invariant to Title I)?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• District revenue by source (federal, state, local) and by category	• CCD Part VIII
• District tallies of targeted and non-targeted pupils	• Office of Compensatory Education
• School tallies of targeted and non-targeted pupils	• Office of Compensatory Education
• School level expenditures (by category), both including and excluding the expenditure of Title I funds	• LEA comparability reports
• Targeting-status for each pupil or pupil counts for each target mix within districts	•
• Resource utilization data (in dollars or other common metric) for each pupil or for all pupils in each target mix within districts	•

(continued)

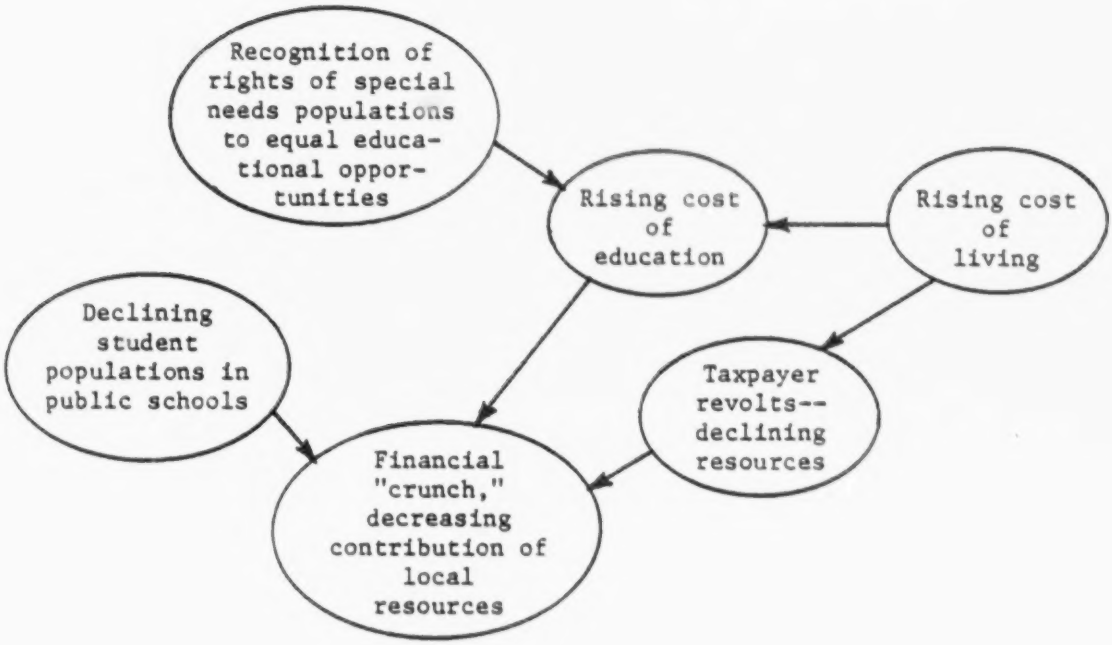
Table 2 (cont.)

Issue 5: What are the implications of providing public support to private elementary and secondary education?

a. Will it lead to increased competition between public and private schools and to greater declines in public school enrollment?
b. Will it increase opportunities for low-income and minority children or will it merely provide tuition relief to middle-income families?
c. Will it lead to increased or decreased segregation by class, creed, and color?
d. What form of support would be considered most acceptable?
e. Is such support constitutional?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Trends in enrollment at public and private schools, by income level, race, and religion	• National Center for Education Statistics, Survey of nonpublic schools; CCD Part VI-A
• Tuition rates and scholarships at private schools	•
• Application rates at private schools by income level, race, and religion	•
• Admission rates as a proportion of applications at private schools, by income level, race, and religion	•
• Public opinions about the propriety of federal support to private schools, by control of the private school	•
• Public opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of attending private schools that are integrated or segregated on the basis of SES, race, or religion.	•
• Court decisions concerning the constitutionality of government aid to religious schools	• Bolmeier, E. C., Landmark Supreme Court decisions on public school issues (1973)

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES


Recognition of rights of special needs populations to equal educational opportunities
Rising cost of education
Rising cost of living
Declining student populations in public schools
Taxpayer revolts--declining resources
Financial "crunch," decreasing contribution of local resources

The essential feature of the federal involvement in education during the last quarter century has been the concern for equality of educational opportunity. Although the meaning of "equality of educational opportunity" has been widely debated, it is currently measured in terms of access, choice, and outcomes. On the one hand, federal courts have called for redesigning educational policies and practices to lead to increased equality of opportunity. On the other hand, Congress has voted to support programs that aim to remove existing inequalities by providing extra funds to deal with barriers to equal opportunity. Largely because of this concern for equality of opportunity, the Education Amendments of 1978 retain the approach of categorical funding targeted for specific groups with identifiable needs. Moreover, this concern has led to continued support of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing financial assistance for compensatory education for educationally deprived children in low

income areas, as the cornerstone of federal aid to the nation's elementary and secondary schools. It should be noted that this focus on equality of opportunity results from the activities of a variety of interest groups, such as the NAACP, the ACLU, the LCCRL, the Urban League, the NEA, and the AFT, that have pursued reform through lobbying efforts and through court action.

The following two sections highlight current issues of educational equity for special needs groups. The first section focuses on defining educational equity, and the second section deals with the implementation of specific programs to achieve such equity.

Equality of Educational Opportunity

In the deliberations surrounding the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the "strong correlation between the levels of income and educational underachievement...findings of widespread poverty in the United States and findings that school districts with concentrations of poverty faced great difficulties in supporting even a basic educational program" prompted congressional action (U.S. Code: Legislative History, 1978, p. 6). This action was directed toward ameliorating inequities in the educational system for certain target groups. Since 1965, concerns about educational equity have increased and expanded to include subpopulations that were not previously recognized as needing special consideration (e.g., handicapped students) within the framework of public educational systems. As the volume of categorical aid has increased, subpopulations that are not receiving special benefits are beginning to question whether the presumed inequities do, in fact, exist.

Central to this debate is a basic question regarding the definition of equal educational opportunities. For example, Gilmartin (1979) reviews five classic definitions and notes how the different conception of equal educational opportunities have led to recent debates and criticisms among professional educators. In addition, with increased attention focused on educational finance, some have

argued that categorical aid programs fail to serve other forms of equity such as that as defined by school finance equalization across districts. However, as discussed in an earlier section, a variety of definitions of equity exist in the school finance area, each with different implementation formulae, different fiscal ramifications, and different targets for student results.

Special Services to Promote Equal Educational Opportunity

Under the assumption that inequities do, in fact, exist, special programs and services have been established to promote greater equality of educational opportunity. The implementation and the effects of some of these programs have raised many issues. The following discussion will highlight current major concerns regarding three specific kinds of services: (1) desegregation plans, (2) bilingual programs, and (3) education for the handicapped. These areas were most salient during 1978-79, although others occasionally appeared in the review (e.g., sex equity programs, gifted minority programs).

Desegregation plans. Some would argue that desegregation is no longer a major problem area in education (Education USA, October 4, 1978). As a specific example, school and city officials have recently commented that the worst of Boston's integration problems have been solved (Education USA, September 11, 1978). Nevertheless, controversy still rages about the development, implementation, and effects of desegregation plans. In principle, many would agree that voluntary desegregation plans can achieve more positive results than can mandatory plans; however, some voluntary plans never become fully implemented or are very limited in scope. The failure of voluntary plans or the noncompliance with mandatory plans may provoke legislative or judicial actions to enforce laws requiring desegregation of educational facilities and services. Because of reports of negative effects of busing programs on both students and communities, new kinds of programs, such as magnet schools, have been proposed to replace or to augment the traditional busing programs. At the same time, legislative initiatives, such as the Eagleton-Biden anti-busing amendment, have been introduced to limit the use of busing as a means of achieving desegregation.

The issues in this area are not new. Because the fundamental question of what constitutes equal opportunity relates to deeply held beliefs about individual differences, these issues require ever more sophisticated research designs to deal with competing theories. It is not likely that the major issues will be resolved without a substantial new commitment of research funds. But, even if scientifically acceptable answers were found, they might only play an indirect policy role. It must be recognized that the answers to the major issues are influenced by the stridency with which representatives of disadvantaged groups call for increased educational opportunities for their constituencies. Thus, the potential for an effect of objective data on these issues depends on a policy mechanism that has not yet been developed.

Table 3

Issues about Equality of Educational Opportunities

Issue 1: Does racial segregation in the schools remain a serious problem?

a. Have a disproprotionate number of ethnic minority students been placed in special classes or schools for the emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded? Have a disproportionate number of minority students been placed in lower academic tracks and assigned to non-college-preparatory curricula?
b. Do minority students have the same educational opportunities and resources as whites? in the North? in the South?
c. Are white parents becoming more receptive to school integration than they were 15 years ago? in the North? in the South?
d. What are the effects of segregated education other than the effects of differential levels of school resources? What are the effects of segregation by ability level, culture, or SES?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Proportions of children of various ages diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, by race	•
• Proportions of children of various ages diagnosed as mentally retarded and their IQ scores as measured on "culture-free" tests, by race	•
• Proportions of pupils assigned to lower academic tracks or non-college-preparatory tracks and their IQ scores and past academic achievement, by race	• National Longitudinal Study; Cooperative Institutional Research Program, The American freshman: National norms
• Trends in the percentages of minority students receiving instruction physically separated from whites, but who could receive the same instruction in an integrated setting (by region and by type of instruction)	• Compensatory Reading Study; Sustaining Effects Study
• Trends in the number and type of court cases dealing with segregation	• Bolmeier, E. C., Landmark Supreme Court decisions on public school issues (1973)
• Trends in between-school and between-district variation in percent minority enrollment, adjusted for variation in size of minority group in regional populations	• Office of Civil Rights, Racial and ethnic enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools
• Measures of use of categorical programs to segregate students (such as the correlation of degree of racial integration in individual schools with the tendency for categorical aid to be applied to "pull out" students for special instruction in separate classrooms)	• National Longitudinal Study; American Institutes for Research, Project TALENT
• Admissions to colleges and noncollegiate postsecondary schools as a function of academic performance in high school and on admission tests, by race	• American College Testing Program, Assessing students on the way to college
• Correlates of segregation controlling for individual abilities and background and the availability of school resources	• National Longitudinal Study; American Institutes for Research, Project TALENT
• Comparison of achievement gains in "pull out" versus "in class" programs for categorical assistance	• Compensatory Reading Study; Sustaining Effects Study
• Trends in the availability of educational resources to students of different races	•
• Trends in whites' attitudes about school integration, as measured by opinion polls and by frequency of attempts to avoid schools with larger minority percentages than surrounding schools (e.g., private school enrollment, school change permits, votes against busing)	• National Opinion Research Center; Survey Research Service; American Institute of Public Opinion (The Gallup Poll)

Issue 2: Are certain groups of children failing to receive equal educational opportunities?

a. Can race differences in educational attainment be attributed to unequal opportunities?
b. Can native language differences in educational attainment be attributed to unequal opportunities?
c. Can differences between handicapped and nonhandicapped students in educational attainment be attributed to unequal opportunities?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Data on objective and subjective differences in educational services and resources available to certain groups	• Coleman, J. S., Equality of educational opportunity (1966)
• Well-controlled data on the relations between educational services and resources, and educational attainment for various groups	• National Longitudinal Study; American Institutes for Research, Project TALENT

Table 4

Issues about Desegregation

Issue 1: What are the effects of busing on schoolchildren?

a. Does it lead to improved education for minority children?
b. Does it lead to improved education for nonminority children?
c. Is there an increase in the educational attainment of minority and nonminority children?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Data on the effects of busing on the availability of educational services and resources, including instructional time	• St. John, N. H., School desegregation outcomes for children (1975)
• Well-controlled data on the effects of busing on educational attainment, by race	• Crain, R. L., Southern schools: An evaluation of the effects of the Emergency School Assistance Program and of desegregation (1973); St. John, N. H., School desegregation outcomes for children (1975); Felice, L. G., & Richardson, R. L., Effects of busing and school desegregation on majority and minority school dropout rate (1977)

Issue 2: What are the effects of busing on the schools and communities?

a. How much of an increase is court-ordered busing over normal busing? Does it lead to a decrease in school segregation or does resegregation occur?
b. In the short term, does busing lead to sharpened racial conflict and to increased violence in the schools? In the long term, does it lead to better understanding among racial groups?
c. How large are the costs that result from resistance to desegregation?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Time series on the degree of segregation in school systems desegregated several years ago	• Office of Civil Rights, Racial and ethnic enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools
• The total number of pupil-hours of busing each school day nationwide and an estimate of the number of pupil-hours of busing that would occur in the absence of any court-ordered busing	•
• Measures of violence in schools as a function of the proportion of minority students	•
• Time series of violence in desegregated schools (both those previously black and those previously white) for several years before and after desegregation	•
• Measures of opinions concerning other racial groups as a function of student race and racial composition of the school	• Roper Organization; American Institute of Public Opinion (The Gallup Poll); Public Opinion Survey, National Opinion Research Center; Survey Research Service
• Time series of students' opinions of other racial groups both before and after desegregation	•

Issue 3: What effective alternatives to busing exist?

a. Is integration more effective when the suburbs are included?
b. Is it best to begin in the early elementary grades?
c. Does integration ever occur voluntarily, or does it only happen when it is ordered by the courts?
d. How effective are the monitoring and enforcement efforts by federal agencies? What would result from an increase in these efforts?
e. How effective are monetary incentives to students for attending integrated schools outside their neighborhood?
f. How effective are magnet schools?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Data for Issues 1 and 2, partitioned into cases where suburbs are and are not included, and corrected for demographic differences	• See data sources listed above
• Data for Issues 1 and 2, partitioned into cases starting with early grades and others, corrected for demographic differences	• See data sources listed above
• Data on the effects of introducing monetary incentives for attendance at integrated schools	•
• Data on the effects of magnet schools on integration percentages	•
• Identification of schools that have become more integrated in the last 5-10 years, then a tabulation of the causes and methods	•

Bilingual programs. Basic questions about the nature, purpose, and benefits of bilingual programs for students with limited English language proficiency are still being asked. At the very least, state compliance with the Lau decision is difficult because of the lack of published regulations. At a more global level, uncertainty still exists as to whether students should be taught to function in English as soon as possible or whether they should continue to be taught certain basic subjects in their own language until having mastered English. Other concerns range from those regarding the effects of bilingual education on participating students (e.g., "separate but equal" treatment in a new guise) to the effects on society in general (e.g., national divisiveness, political instability).

Education for the handicapped. The passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) has raised widespread apprehension and concern because of implications for dramatic increases in school costs. School districts and states are uncertain as to the types of services and programs that they are required to provide. For example, questions have been posed as to whether year-round special education should be available to handicapped children. Amid this uncertainty about requirements and regulations are claims that some schools are not supplying certain groups of handicapped students with programs and activities tailored to their needs (see Education Daily, December 12, 1978). At the root of these concerns lies the fear that, unless new funds are directed to the schools, resources and services for regular programs will have to be drastically cut to meet the needs of handicapped students. In times of diminishing financial resources, these problems become even more salient.

Table 5

Issues about Bilingual Education

Issue 1: What are the implications of promoting bilingualism in the schools?

a. Is there a legal obligation to provide some special services?
b. Do students benefit from learning two languages--learning English and preserving their native language?
c. What are the effects of including English-speaking children in bilingual classes and "mainstreaming" bilingual children in art, music, and physical education classes?
d. Will bilingual education lead to national divisiveness and political instability?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Well-controlled data on the effects of learning and being taught in two languages on educational achievement	•
• Data on achievement and attitude changes related to participation in bilingual classes	• American Institutes for Research, Title VII Program Evaluation (1977, 1978); Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, G. R., The bilingual education of children.*
• Data on the effects of bilingual education on perceptions of American identity and ethnic heritage	•

Issue 2: How can the English-language deficiencies of language minority children and of other disadvantaged groups be reduced most effectively?

a. Are school districts finding it difficult to comply with the Lau decision? What is the result?
b. Is complete immersion in English best?
c. Will time limits to local bilingual grantees be effective?
d. Will a two-year limit on instruction for a child be effective?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Data on frequencies and kinds of responses (by school districts) to the court-ordered services for language minorities)	• Epstein, N., Language, ethnicity, and the schools**
• Comparison of educational achievement of participants and nonparticipants in bilingual classes who had the same English language abilities when starting instruction	• American Institutes for Research, Title VII Program Evaluation (1977, 1978)
• Comparison of outcome achievement levels in bilingual programs with two-year participation limits versus those without limits	• DHEW, Four studies to be initiated this year (some data forthcoming)
• Data on the long-term effects of federal social programs with local time limits	•

*A Canadian study of French/English programs--may not be generalizeable to the U.S. context

**A book introducing no new data but providing insightful secondary analysis

Table 6

Issues about Education for the Handicapped

Issue 1: How will implementing the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) affect the financial condition of the schools?

a. Why is the total number of handicapped children being served by the states under P.L. 94-142 (EAHCA) lower than the DHEW projections?
b. What percentage of handicapped children are currently in regular classrooms?
c. Will many school districts have to cut regular programs to meet the requirements of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act?
d. Is it less expensive to send handicapped children to private schools than to educate them in public schools?
e. Do increased demands on teachers to teach the handicapped in regular classrooms result in teacher strikes?
f. Is the federal government requiring expensive additional services for handicapped children without increased federal assistance? Are many SEAs and LEAs initiating activities without federal resources?
g. Will the courts become involved in problems of the handicapped (e.g., suits against teachers for mishandling "nursing chores," claims of handicapped children to have special services, claims of "competing equity" between nonhandicapped and regular students)?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Records of processes by which estimates of the handicapped were produced, and an in-depth analysis of counts for a sample of districts	• Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH), Annual Report to Congress; also data collected by BEH Division of Assistance to states; State Annual Program Plans; Council for Exceptional Children data (Virginia); National Assoc. of State Directors of Special Education
• Crosstabulations of handicapping conditions and school settings	• National Center for Education Statistics, Survey of Income and Education (1976)
• Listing of additional resources and services and associated costs required by EAHCA and comparison of these costs with funding availability	•
• Crosstabulations of per-pupil costs associated with various handicapping conditions in various school settings	•
• Tabulation of frequency of steps taken to avoid presence of handicapped children in regular classroom, by type of handicap	• SRI-International, 94-142 Implementation Evaluation
• Survey of conditions increasing the likelihood of court action, as derived from studies of other court-order areas	•

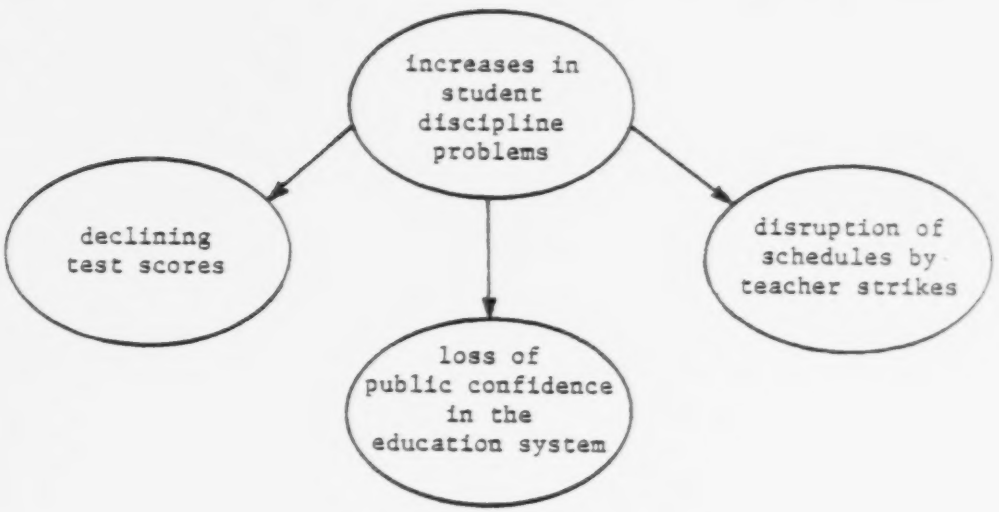
Issue 2: How far should "mainstreaming" handicapped children go?

a. What kinds of students are currently in segregated special education programs?
b. What is the correspondence between the individualized education plans (IEPs) and the services that are provided?
c. What are the results of special services and programs for the handicapped (e.g., IEPs, removal of architectural barriers, year-round special education)?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Crosstabulations of handicapping conditions and school settings, by other characteristics of students (e.g., age, race, sex)	• National Center for Education Statistics, Survey of Income and Education (1976)
• An evaluation of IEPs and other services for handicapped children	• SRI-International, 94-142 Implementation Evaluation; Turnkey, Inc., 94-142 Case Study

LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Evidence continued to mount in 1978-79 that the American public was dissatisfied with its schools. An increasing number of employers and colleges instituted training programs in basic skills, and parents' overall discontent with their children's schooling was at an all time high. New court suits were brought by parents whose children were awarded high school diplomas without learning to read or write or do simple arithmetic. Statistics on drug abuse, arson, and violence continued their depressing increase; and teachers spent an increasing percentage of their time on picket lines.


increases in student discipline problems
declining test scores
disruption of schedules by teacher strikes
loss of public confidence in the education system

Declining Test Scores

Questions about educational quality could be raised about many school services, but the most prevalent questions address deteriorating student performance on language and math tests. Debate continues about whether test score declines indicate decreases in student basic skill abilities, decreases in student motivation on tests, changes in kinds of students taking the tests, or other factors. Educational

research has explored possible causes of changing test scores. For example, a recent study determined that educational environments that are too authoritarian or too casual are associated with short attention spans of students and that, in many classrooms, student "time on task" in reading and math instruction was less than 100 hours per year (Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing, 1978). The study concludes that, though students may need more time to learn, a back-to-basics movement to improve student performance is not really warranted. Nevertheless, public awareness of test score declines has been cited as one possible cause of increased enrollment in private schools, as affluent families send their children to private schools in the hope that these schools will provide high quality of education unavailable in the public school (Washington Post, September 13, 1978).

Issues in this area may ultimately have an overwhelming importance for education in America, because they relate to the school's performance. Although there is no simple policy that would reverse declining test scores, evidence of a continuing decline would affect all policy considerations by adding the imperative, "do something different." Longitudinal data bases are needed to evaluate claims of deteriorating achievement in the schools. Because of the foresight of those who planned NAEP, those who maintained records of college board examinations, and those who designed Project TALENT, data exist to address issues in this area, but these data must be continually updated to monitor the progress of schools.

Table 7

Issues about Test Score Declines

Issue 1: How serious are the reported test score declines?

a. Have achievement test scores declined? If so, how great is the decline? Is the decline continuing?
b. What are the reasons for the test score declines?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Trends in achievement test scores by subject by student characteristics	• American College Testing Program; College Entrance Examination Board; National Assessment of Educational Progress; Cleary, T. A., & McCandless, S. O., Summary of score changes (in other tests) (1977)
• Information on the interyear comparability of tests	• American College Testing Program; College Entrance Examination Board
• Social trends that might account for the declines	• Silver, E. S., Declining test scores (1976); Advisory Panel on the SAT Score Decline (1977); Glover, R. H, Major societal changes in the U.S. (1933-44 and 1963-75): Contextual mapping (1977)
• Relationship of the material tested to the subject matters taught in school (i.e., information on possible changes in the validity of achievement tests)	• Braswell, J., & Petersen, N., An investigation of item obsolescence in the SAT (1977); Ford, S. F, & Campos, S., Summary of validity data from the Admissions Testing Program Validity Study Service (1977); Massachusetts Department of Education, Survey of curricula offerings (1967, 1970, 1972, 1973)

Issue 2: What are the implications of reports of test score declines?

a. To what extent have declining achievement scores influenced the parents of "bright children" to send their children to private schools?
b. Do business and industrial employers increasingly question the validity of a high school diploma?
c. Is the increasing variety of subjects taught to high school students worth the decreasing abilities in basic skills?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Trends in private school enrollment by student characteristics	• Nonpublic School Survey
• Reasons for sending children to a private school by student characteristics	•
• Trends in opinions of business and industrial employers about quality of work of high school graduates	•
• Trends in public perceptions concerning the achievement levels of students, by whether or not the person has a child in school	• National Opinion Research Center; American Institute of Public Opinion (The Gallup Poll)
• Trends on the variety of information and skills acquired by high school students	• National Center for Education Statistics, Summary of offerings and enrollments in public secondary schools

Student Discipline Problems

According to the latest Gallup Poll of attitudes about public schools, the two most severe problems facing schools involve student discipline and drug abuse. Public attitudes about these problems appear to be well founded. Edward Wynne (1978) has recently suggested that they are symptomatic of growing alienation of youth since the

1950s--as indicated by increases in suicide rates, homicide rates, drug and alcohol abuse, and the rates of illegitimate births, venereal disease, and delinquency. Discipline problems in schools include many forms of student violence: destruction of school property, theft, carrying of dangerous weapons, assaults on other students and on teachers, and arson (according to an NEA nationwide poll of teachers).

Beliefs about the causes of discipline and drug problems vary considerably. At one extreme, student alienation is viewed as a reflection of widespread social pathology (rather than behavior that deviates from the values of a beneficent society). At the other extreme, a Stanford University study (Duke, 1978) reported that these problems result from poor school staff management of students (e.g., inconsistent rule enforcement, teacher and administrator noncompliance with discipline policies). Other opinions of causative factors that are somewhere between these extremes include readily available drugs and weapons, changes in school and parental attitudes toward responsibility for youth behavior, beliefs that the courts have tied the hands of educators, deterioration of rapport between students and staff in schools, too much violence on television, and worsening living conditions in large cities.

The allocation of additional personnel to increase school security and prevent vandalism and violence is one approach for dealing with discipline and drug problems. Others include the use of peer counseling; the creation of alternative programs for disruptive students; conferences of school officials, parents, and police officers; increased student decision-making in policy areas; training faculty and students in problem solving and communications; and the creation of more adequate extracurricular activities. According to an administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice, however, locally developed school crime prevention and control programs are not cost-effective, and their focus on security often heightens school tensions. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice, no overall strategy now exists to assist schools in meeting the challenge of serious crime.

Table 8

Issues about Student Discipline

Issue 1: How serious are student discipline and drug problems?

a. What are the trends in the incidence of student violence, destruction of school property, theft, carrying of dangerous weapons by students, assaults on teachers, arson, drug and alcohol abuse, and truancy?
b. What are the effects of these trends on the overall quality of schools as learning environments?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Time-series data on the reports of discipline problems, crimes, drug/alcohol abuse in schools	• National Institute on Drug Abuse, Annual High School Senior Survey, Household Survey (every two years); National Center for Education Statistics, school attendance rates (as surrogate for other measures of school climate) - CCD; Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; National Education Association, Nationwide Teacher Opinion Poll - annual
• Time-series analyses of the relationships between discipline and drug problems in the schools and student achievement scores	• National Center for Education Statistics, School attendance rates (as district level surrogate for school "climate") - CCD

Issue 2: What are the causes of discipline and drug problems?

a. To what extent are student discipline problems related to general societal trends toward increased crime and drug/alcohol abuse?
b. How do discipline and drug/alcohol problems vary by school and student characteristics?
c. Are student discipline problems related to ineffective student management practices?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Measures of association between rates of crime and drug/alcohol abuse in communities in which schools are located, and the rates of student discipline, drug, and alcohol problems in those schools	• Department of Census, County and City Data Book (auto thefts and vandalism); Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports; Current Population Survey, community SES by school district; National Center for Education Statistics, attendance rates - CCD
• Crosstabulations of rates of discipline, drug, and alcohol problems by school and student characteristics (e.g., population density of community, SES of community, ethnicity of students, ability levels of students)	• Office of Civil Rights, Survey of minority enrollment; Department of Census, Current Population Survey, County and City Data Book; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports; Current Population Survey, community SES by school district; National Center for Education Statistics, attendance rates - CCD
• Measures of the association between particular kinds of student management practices and rate of student discipline, drug, and alcohol problems (controlled for differences among schools in relevant student and community characteristics)	•

Issue 3: What methods appear to be most effective in combatting student discipline and drug problems?

a. How effective are stricter discipline policies?
b. How effective are practices that bring more security personnel into schools?
c. How successful have existing school crime prevention programs been?
d. How effective are counseling and guidance programs in reducing discipline problems?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Time-series data (with schools as the unit of analysis) on changes in rates of discipline, drug, and alcohol problems, and types of practices for combatting them, including: a. stricter discipline b. increased numbers of security personnel c. school-developed crime prevention programs d. counseling and guidance programs oriented to combat discipline, drug, and alcohol problems	•

Teacher Strikes and Work Stoppages

Teacher strikes and work stoppages have been increasing over the past decade. Indeed, more school openings were disrupted this past year by teacher strikes than by threatened violence over busing (Time, September 18, 1978). The courts have become increasingly involved in these disputes as evidenced by dramatic rises in fines and imprisonment for striking teachers.

Various concerns have been cited as the major causes of these strikes. These range from salaries and job security to class size and administrative procedures. Of major importance, however, are the results of these strikes on the students, the teachers, and the schools. Although substitute teachers may be hired, they cannot provide "education as usual" for the affected students. Whether teachers benefit economically, or in other ways, from a prolonged work stoppage is not clear. Administrators in districts that are facing heightened financial pressures, as described earlier in this paper, will be reluctant to grant wage and benefit demands. Thus, maintenance of cordial relations between teachers and administrators can be expected to become increasingly difficult.

Issues in this area are of somewhat lower priority only because currently there exists no clear avenue for policy development to deal with teacher strikes. Teacher strikes have been largely a local matter; however, with the emergence of a strong national teachers' union, we can expect increasingly widely based actions in the future. The federal government may develop policies of assistance in arbitration, but the main effect on teacher strikes can be obtained through federal policies that reduce pressures leading to strikes. On the side of data availability, there is a clear need for development of a comprehensive data base describing the events surrounding the many teacher contract disputes and their resolutions.

Table 9

Issues about Teacher Strikes

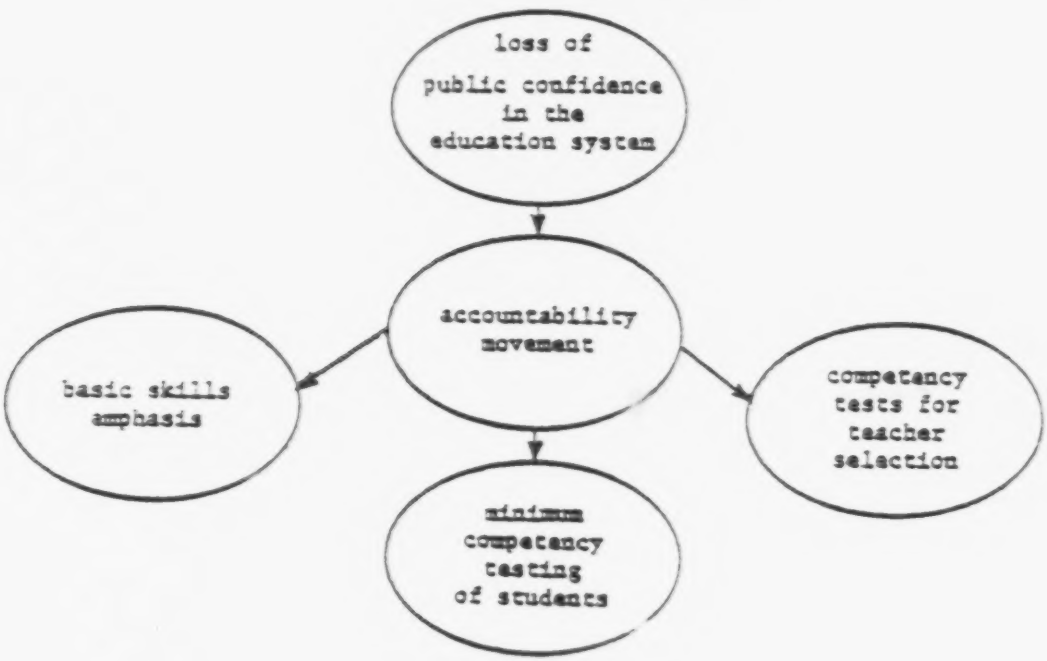
Issue 1: What are the implications of increases in teacher strikes?

a. Have teacher strikes disrupted an increasing number of school openings?
b. What are the major demands in teacher strikes?
c. Can nonstriking teachers and substitutes provide "education as usual" in the face of a strike by district teachers?
d. Do financial pressures on schools (from declining enrollments) exacerbate teacher wage/benefit disputes?
e. What are the implications of binding arbitration in place of collective bargaining in teacher strikes?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Trends in the number of teacher strikes	• U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, Work stoppages in government
• Trends in unionization of teachers, including percentage of total number that are represented by unions (partitioned by union affiliation)	• American Federation of Teachers; National Education Association (NEA)
• Major demands in teacher strikes by school district characteristics	•
• Kinds of courses offered before, during, and after teacher strikes by school district characteristics	•
• Achievement test scores by number of teacher strikes in the past five years, controlling for school district characteristics	• American Federation of Teachers; NEA, National Assessment of Education Progress; SAT; National Center for Educational Statistics - CCD

THE ACCOUNTABILITY MOVEMENT

Public concern about the quality of educational programs has led to an accountability movement that has had two main components: an increased emphasis on "basic skills" and the establishment of testing programs to ensure that students, particularly high school students, have mastered certain "minimal competencies." A third emerging pattern, which may become as widespread as the use of minimal competency tests for students, is the use of competency exams for teacher selection.


loss of public confidence in the education system
accountability movement
basic skills emphasis
competency tests for teacher selection
minimum competency testing of students

Basic Skills

A public mandate that schools focus on the basics carries the implicit message that school personnel should not have sacrificed the fundamental core of the curriculum for nonessential breadth. However, the problems of defining basic skills, assessing the extent of the need for basic skills instruction, and implementing an instructional

program are at the heart of debate generated by the basic skills movement. All basic skills definitions include the 3 Rs, but conflict exists over what other subject areas should also be termed basic.

More emphasis on the 3 Rs is clearly needed for some students. Estimates of illiteracy among high school graduates run as high as 15%, although a recent NIE study showed that few if any functionally illiterate students have been awarded high school diplomas (Education Daily, September 24, 1978). However, George McGovern disagreed with the findings of the NIE study, calling it "an excuse [for] rather than an examination of illiteracy." He blames the practice of social promotion for allowing illiterates to graduate from high school. Even U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest Boyer feels that the education system has not kept pace with the increasingly complex requirements of language usage.

Some opponents of basic skills programs have expressed concern that the programs may lead to segregated remedial classes. Others feel that a strong emphasis on basic skills might hamper the education of children who are able to master basics quickly and would benefit from moving on to other subjects. Much uncertainty remains about how many students really have basic skills deficiencies.

This is the area in which the perennial issues about the goals of the schools are currently focused. The "uncertainty" in this area differs from that expressed in other issue areas: many individuals and interest groups have very definite answers to supply but these answers vary from group to group. The salience of these issues was raised by inclusion of a new Title II in the Education Amendments of 1978 dealing explicitly with Basic Skills, but funding of that Title has not yet been resolved. Many data sources contain fragments of the data needed to address issues in this area, but no source (or even a theoretical framework) currently exists that would provide the basis for relating the purposes of the schools to quality of life in society in general.

Table 10

Issues about Basic Skills

Issue 1: What are the proper objectives of the schools?

a. Should schools provide only "basics" or should they teach such things as values and vocational education?
b. What should a "basic education" include?
c. Do basic skills programs result in segregated remedial classes?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Opinions of legislators, educators, and the public concerning objectives of the school and courses to be included in the curriculum	• Gallup Poll of public attitudes about education
• Trends in numbers of remedial classes and in characteristics of students in such classes for districts with and without basic skills programs	•

Issue 2: Are schools failing to provide adequate preparation for adult work and life?

a. How many students have basic skills deficiencies?
b. Is the illiteracy rate among high school graduates alarmingly high? Or, can most students read and write, but has their education failed to help them keep pace with the increasingly complex requirements of language usage?
c. Has the federal government hindered rather than helped schools in teaching basic skills because it has supported a series of fads in education?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Trends in achievement test scores in reading, writing, and mathematics for various grade levels	• National Assessment of Education Progress; SAT; state competency exams; NIE/National Evaluation Systems (NES) study of competency exams
• Trends in illiteracy rate among high school graduates and dropouts	•
• Trends in numbers of employers who have special training programs in the basic skills for recent high school graduates	•
• Trends in numbers of entering college freshmen who are enrolled in remedial classes in writing and mathematics	•

Issue 3: How can educational productivity be improved?

a. Are there particular kinds of students for whom a "basic skills" approach would be superior to other teaching methods? Or would a "basic skills" approach benefit all students?
b. Is "time on task" more important than the method used in teaching basic skills? Does "time on task" vary with the type of classroom environment?
c. What are the effects of changing the definition of basic skills (in the 1978 Education Amendments) to include oral communication? How should oral skills be measured?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Achievement test scores by student characteristics (e.g., sex, race, grade level) before and after implementation of basic skills program	• National Assessment of Education Progress
• Achievement test scores by "time on task" by teaching method	•
• Time on task by type of classroom environment, controlling for type of class	•

Minimal Competency Testing

The debate over basic skills programs is closely related to the debate over the merits of minimal competency testing, and it is likely that statewide patterns of competency testing scores will be used to answer questions about the extent of the need for basic skills programs. Student competency testing serves to ensure that schools will identify and attempt to remediate students who are deficient in basic skills.

Advocates feel that the minimal competency testing movement represents "a bright promise for the disadvantaged" (Jenne Britell, personal communication). In their view, the tests will motivate teachers to teach more purposefully and students to work harder. Competency standards provide criteria for holding school systems, as well as students, accountable for learning failure or success. Also important, the use of competency tests as prerequisites for graduation may improve public confidence in education and increase the value of a high school diploma.

The movement's critics see many problems, however. Many educators agree with Connecticut Education Commissioner Mark Shedd, who feels that the ultimate goal of education should not be "a minimum score on a single test" (Education U.S.A., November 27, 1978). Some fear that a focus on minimal competencies could lessen teacher efforts to encourage students to do their best work. Furthermore, statewide competency tests that ultimately influence district-level curricula have the effect of eroding local decisionmaking about school curricula.

Concerned parents and teachers also worry about the effects of branding some students failures. This is particularly critical for certain groups, including minorities, the handicapped, and the bilingual, because critics fear that tests may be used to justify segregation of minority students or to exclude minorities from the labor force. For example, Florida's testing program was challenged in a lawsuit after the math competency test was failed by two-thirds of the state's black students. With some handicapped students, most states

face a dual problem: requiring such students to take competency tests, in their standard form, may discriminate against those whose disabilities cause them to perform poorly; while excluding them from the tests may deny them their right to be certified as competent. Bilingual students seldom have their special language needs acknowledged in competency testing programs; few plans even address the question of whether students with limited English-speaking ability should be required to meet proficiency standards in English. Finally, private school personnel are concerned because they are not usually consulted when state testing plans are developed, even though private school students may be subject to statewide exams.

Various technical questions about competency testing must be answered before technically acceptable programs can be implemented. First, a definition of "abilities needed in adulthood" must be agreed upon. Then, standards must be developed which permit an operational definition that can be measured appropriately. In this process, questions of test construction, including questions about validity, reliability, and scoring (and, in particular, questions about where cut-off scores are set), require careful examination. This is especially critical when such tests are used for "testing out" of high school programs.

Finally, questions of the cost of minimal competency testing must be answered. Who will provide the money for test development and administration, and, more importantly, who will pay for remedial education for students who do not pass the tests? Testing programs are expensive to develop, update, regulate, administer, and defend in cases of legal challenge. Remediation programs may be enormously expensive, leading school systems to become more dependent on state funds. Whatever the source of funds, it is likely that minimal competency testing programs will raise public costs for education, if the purpose is to increase the minimum level of educational achievement of students leaving the schools.

Table 11

Issues about Minimal Competency Testing

Issue 1: What are the implications of minimal competency testing?

a. What will be the effects of requiring a passing score on a minimal competency test for graduation from high school?
b. Will the "minimum" requirements become the normal requirements in states with minimal competency testing?
c. Will minimal competency testing result in increased or decreased motivation and performance on the average among all teachers and students or among certain groups of teachers and students?
d. Does minimal competency testing put an unfair burden on students?
e. Do competency testing programs discriminate against certain groups (e.g., the handicapped, minority students, students with limited English-language abilities)? Do such programs result in segregated remedial classes?
f. How expensive are competency testing programs?
g. Do competency testing programs strengthen state authority and weaken local authority?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Achievement test scores for students in states with and without minimal competency testing	• National Assessment of Educational Progress; College Entrance Examination Board
• Dropout rates and characteristics of dropouts from states with and without minimal competency testing	• U.S. Department of Labor, Students, graduates, and dropouts in the labor market; Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20
• Resources expended for students with different achievement test scores (e.g., below average, average, above average) in states with and without minimal competency testing	• Education Commission of the States, Information on competency testing in states
• Failure rate and characteristics of students who fail minimal competency tests	• NIE/National Evaluation Systems (NES), Four-year study of minimal competency testing (now in first year)
• Trends in number of remedial classes and characteristics of students in such classes in states with and without minimal competency testing	•
• Costs incurred in establishing and maintaining competency testing programs, including administration, testing, and remedial programs	•
• Trends in curriculum decisions based on competency testing program	• National Center for Education Statistics, Summary of offerings and enrollments in secondary schools
• Trends in achievement test scores before and after certain states instituted minimal competency testing	• College Entrance Examination Board
• Trends in dropout rates and characteristics of dropouts in particular states before and after they instituted minimal competency testing	• Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20

Issue 2: In what form should competency testing programs be implemented?

a. What skills should be tested?
b. Should competency testing programs begin in the elementary grades?
c. What should be done with students who are unable to pass competency tests?
d. What should be done to take into account the special situations of the handicapped and limited English-language-ability students?
e. Should optional federal competency standards be developed?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Comparison of effects on students (e.g., achievement test scores, dropout rates) among states including the same or different skills on competency tests	• NIE/NES, Four-year study of minimal competency testing (now in first year); College Entrance Examination Board; Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20
• Estimations of effects on students and of program costs to extend competency testing programs to the elementary grades	•
• Case studies of students who fail to pass competency tests	•
• Estimations of effects on students and of program costs to take into account the special situations of the handicapped and limited English-language-ability students	•
• Opinions of legislators, educators, and the public concerning the minimal skills a person should have to graduate from high school	•
• Opinions of legislators, educators, and the public concerning what should be done with students who are unable to pass competency tests	•
• Opinions of federal and state legislators and educators concerning the advantages and disadvantages of developing optional federal competency standards	•

Competency Tests for Teacher Selection

Many aspects of the system through which educational services are delivered have become the subject of deep public concern. Skepticism about the quality of the education provided in public elementary and secondary schools has generated a minimum competency movement for teacher selection that parallels the movement for minimum competency testing of students. The National Teacher Examinations, developed by Educational Testing Service, are currently used for teacher certification in six states. According to Legislative Review (February 19, 1979), published by the Education Commission of the States, competency testing for teachers is likely to spread to other states, as it is now being incorporated into many state education bills.

The movement has not been warmly received by teachers. The response of the president of the New York Education Association, Edwin Robisch, to a Board of Regents proposal for teacher competency testing, is representative of many teachers' opinions. He asked, "How about minimum competency tests for members of the Board of Regents?" Proponents of these tests point to results of competency tests that have already been accumulated. Education U.S.A. (July 3, 1978) reported that half of Houston's teacher applicants scored lower in math on the district's competency test than the average 11th grader, and that 30% of the teacher applicants did not meet the 11th grade English standards. Education Daily (March 13, 1979) reported the Louisiana State Education Superintendent's announcement that only 52.8% of students graduating from teacher education institutions in that state passed the National Teacher Examinations. Opponents of the tests have argued that cut-off scores are set arbitrarily, that it is unjustifiable to rely on simple pencil-and-paper tests of knowledge in a content area (as opposed to, for example, in-class observations of teaching skill) for selection of teachers, and that the hasty adoption of minimum competency tests will impede the development of more promising approaches to teacher selection.

Table 12

Issues about Competency Testing for Teacher Selection

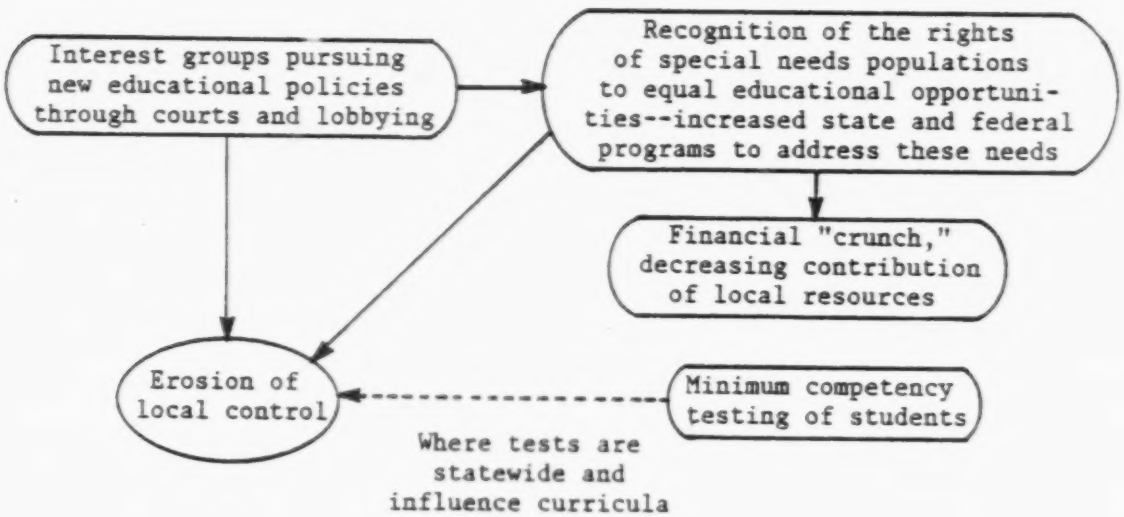
Issue 1: What will be the consequences of state adoption of minimum competency tests for selection of teachers on the quality of the education system?

a. Do existing teacher competency tests validly and reliably measure the kinds and levels of skills demonstrated by high-ability teachers? If not, which skills are not well measured?
b. Will the use of such tests result in the improvement of the overall quality of public school teaching?
c. If such tests are adopted widely, what proportion of teachers now qualified for and seeking positions will be screened out of applicant pools by poor test performance? Is this proportion likely to remain relatively constant over the next 5-10 years?
d. Is the adoption of such tests likely to decrease the supply of teachers, generating shortages, driving up salaries, and thereby increasing the cost of education at a higher rate than now anticipated?
e. Is the trend of state adoption of teacher competency exams likely to continue?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Profiles of skills demonstrated by high ability teachers for comparison with skills measures by test items used in teacher competency tests	• National Teacher Examination (NTE) test construction and norming data
• Measures of discrepancies between teachers certified to be competent by competency exams and those certified to be competent by other means (e.g., consensus of expert observers)	•
• Comparisons of the quality of newly selected teachers in the states using and not using competency exams for selection (that draw upon similar applicant pools)	•
• Projections from test norming data of numbers of prospective teachers likely to fail to pass tests, assuming various cut-off points	• NTE norming data. Test results from Texas, Louisiana, and other locations where teachers have taken existing exams
• Projections of trends in the levels of general abilities of postsecondary students choosing teacher training programs (for adjustment of projections of numbers of prospective teachers likely to fail competency tests at various cut-off levels)	•
• Extrapolations from the past relationship of teacher supply and price to project future teacher salaries, assuming decreased supply of teachers caused by the disqualifying effects of competency tests	•
• Information about numbers of states introducing legislation for teacher competency testing and about the probability of the legislation's passage	• Data collected by the Education Commission of the States
• Evidence of changes in system performance related to instituting competency exams in various areas	•

EROSION OF LOCAL CONTROL

An important issue area in elementary and secondary education concerns erosion of local control over educational services. Its importance extends beyond local levels, to those formulating policy at state and federal levels. Understanding the location of control in the education system is of critical importance in anticipating how education agencies at all levels will react to new policies. In this discussion, loss of local control refers to decreases in the range of decisions about educational resources and services that can be made by district and school level administrators. Such decreases also affect the control of education by district residents; as the range of decisions that can be made by local administrators becomes smaller, the area over which residents can exercise direct influence decreases also.


Interest groups pursuing new educational policies through courts and lobbying
Recognition of the rights of special needs populations to equal educational opportunities--increased state and federal programs to address these needs
Financial "crunch," decreasing contribution of local resources
Erosion of local control
Minimum competency testing of students
Where tests are statewide and influence curricula

Loss of control is the result of a number of recent trends. Perhaps the most publicized is the nationwide "taxpayer revolt" initiated by California's Proposition 13. When taxpayers in a state limit the amount of revenue that can be generated through the taxation of property, they constrain district-level education budgets, historically heavily dependent upon local property tax revenues. These constraints may result in a decrease in the size of district budgets,

requiring a reduction in the range of educational service alternatives that can be considered by district administrators. However, state or federal funds may be obtained to replace lost local tax revenues. If so, control at the local levels may be shifted to state or federal levels, if state and federal funds are earmarked for particular programs. In such cases decisions about program services at local levels will have been shifted to non-local agencies.

State school finance equalization programs may also affect the location of control of educational services (Odden, 1978). Some districts may suffer budget cutbacks, while other districts may receive additional unrestricted funds to increase their budgets. Where restricted state funds are incorporated into district budgets the question of whether local control is enlarged, or reduced and shifted to state agencies, will be determined by whether the balance of control is more heavily influenced by the availability of the new revenues or the imposition of the new restrictions.

Decreases in local control of education have sources other than revenue constraints. David Cohen (1978) has described a gradual shift in power and authority for education decisionmaking from individuals in local and state agencies (who are either elected or accountable to elected officials) to groups of individuals who are neither elected nor accountable to elected officials. These may be special interest groups that are influential through effective use of the courts, as in school finance reform, northern school integration, and education for the handicapped. Such groups also make effective use of single-issue political organizations, as in the case of most of those pursuing the establishment of new school quality standards. A Readers' Digest article (reported in Education U.S.A., November 27, 1978), referring to the National Education Association (NEA), echoed Cohen's concern with shifting power and authority patterns:

> "NEA can more easily move a few dozen key Capitol Hill committeemen whose election campaigns it backed than it can move 50 state legislatures and 16,000 school boards."

> So the creation of a "permanent Potomac power elite" for education could "deliver a mortal blow to our traditional system of grassroots control of education."

According to a recent survey of Minnesota principals (reported in Education Daily, February 27, 1979), local administrators are beginning to respond to the shift of power and authority away from local levels by forming their own unions.

State minimum competency testing may also result in reductions in the range of decisions (in this case about curricula) that will be considered at the local level. Where tests are adopted at the state level, they are likely to influence local administrators to adopt curricula that will directly prepare students for the tests. Even in states such as California, where districts develop their own competency standards and tests, state education staff providing "technical assistance" are likely to caution local personnel against developing "unrealistic" standards or standards that "articulate" poorly with those expected by postsecondary institutions.

Issues in this area are relevant to considerations of policies to return funds to school districts as general revenue sharing. They will also be relevant to the development of new education program regulations (EDGAR). There is little doubt that there has been a long term trend toward centralization in education administration; the issues concern the rate at which this is occurring--will the situation change substantially over the next decade? The data to address the issues in this area are primarily in the public record, although a very substantial effort would be required to aggregate them from their many sources.

Table 13

Issues about Erosion of Local Control

Issue 1: Of what magnitude is the trend of eroding local control?

a. What are the revenues per student at district and school levels (in real dollars)? Are these amounts increasing or decreasing?

b. What is the range of decisions about educational resources and services that can be made by district- and school-level administrators? Is it being enlarged or reduced?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Time-series data on district- and school-level expenditures per student*	• National Center for Education Statistics - CCD
• Time-series data on proportion of district budgets derived from local property tax revenues, from state revenues, and from federal revenues. For state and federal revenues, data on amount that is earmarked and amount that is discretionary	• National Center for Education Statistics - CCD; state and federal law and education revenue allocations
• Periodic assessments at the district and school levels of the degree to which decisions about such matters as class size, testing programs, curricula, hiring and layoff practices, expenditures per pupil, and students to be served are constrained by the directives or influences of non-district groups or agencies	• National Center for Education Statistics, Summary of offerings and enrollments in secondary schools

Issue 2: Is control increasing at the state and/or federal level?

a. Is the proportion of revenues contributed to district budgets by state and federal sources growing?

b. Are restrictions and regulations defining permissible use of state and federal revenues more or less narrow?

c. Is the size of education staffs at state and federal levels changing (relative to total enrollment in public schools)?

d. Do competency testing programs result in transfer of control from local to state and federal levels?

Data Needs	Data Sources
• Time-series data on proportion of district budgets derived from local property tax revenues, from state revenues, and from federal revenues	• National Center for Education Statistics - CCD
• Time-series data on the extent to which state and federal funds have restricted permissible uses	• State and federal law and education revenue allocations
• Time-series data on the size of state-level and federal-level education staffs and on the numbers of students in public elementary and secondary schools	• National Center for Education Statistics - CCD

*Loss of local control, as defined in the text, is the "decrease in the range of decisions about educational resources and services that can be made by district- and school-level administrators." A key determinant of range is the size of the budget.

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APPENDIX A

Overview of the System for Identifying and Prioritizing Issues in Elementary and Secondary Education

The purpose of SAGE Task 1 was to develop a system for identifying and analyzing current and emerging issues in elementary and secondary education. The Center staff could then use the results of this effort in planning and in developing future data collection and reporting efforts. Implementing such a process will increase the frequency with which NCES products provide critical inputs to the education policy-making process.

The dictionary defines an "issue" as "(1) a point of discussion, debate, or dispute, and (2) a matter of wide public concern" (Morris, 1971). Extending that definition somewhat, an issue is a question for which the answer is important in resolving or structuring discussions, debates, and disputes among individuals. By defining an issue as a question, we are avoiding a formulation in terms of statements, either as "topics of concern," such as "school finance" or "desegregation," or as declarations of fact. Both of these latter formulations suffer from being too vague, and they force the reader to decide or identify the points of debate. Questions, on the other hand, directly indicate an information need.

Having defined an issue, it is important to clarify different types of issues. An empirical issue is one that can be answered by the gathering of information. A research issue is an empirical issue in which the answer verifies or contradicts a scientific hypothesis or theory. A policy issue may or may not be empirical, but the alternative answers or resolutions to that issue have implications for policy in that they support certain decisions or actions. For NCES, empirical policy issues are of special importance, since a part of the Center's mission is to provide the information necessary for formulating and evaluating federal education policy alternatives.

Returning to the purpose of this SAGE effort, it was obvious to the authors that, to be useful, a document-monitoring system for identifying and analyzing issues had to do more than aid in the identification of documents to be read and types of issues to be counted. A long list of issues in elementary and secondary education could be generated with or without much reading by just recording "obvious" questions. What is of interest to NCES, though, is the identification of important empirical, research, and policy issues for use in future planning. Because of limited resources, the Center must direct its efforts toward a selected set of issues. Therefore, the system must assist not only in identifying issues but also in establishing priorities among issues and in elaborating the data needs. The following sections briefly describe the process by which issues were identified from written documents and by which priorities were established among these issues.

Identifying Issues

Given the purposes of this task and the definitions that we have imposed, certain limitations or constraints to the issue identification process must be recognized:

(1) Any identified issue must pertain to elementary or secondary education.

(2) There must be evidence of potential disagreement or debate about the answer to the question.

(3) It should be a matter of wide public concern.

(4) It must be potentially possible for information to be gathered or reported that will illuminate the debate surrounding the issue.

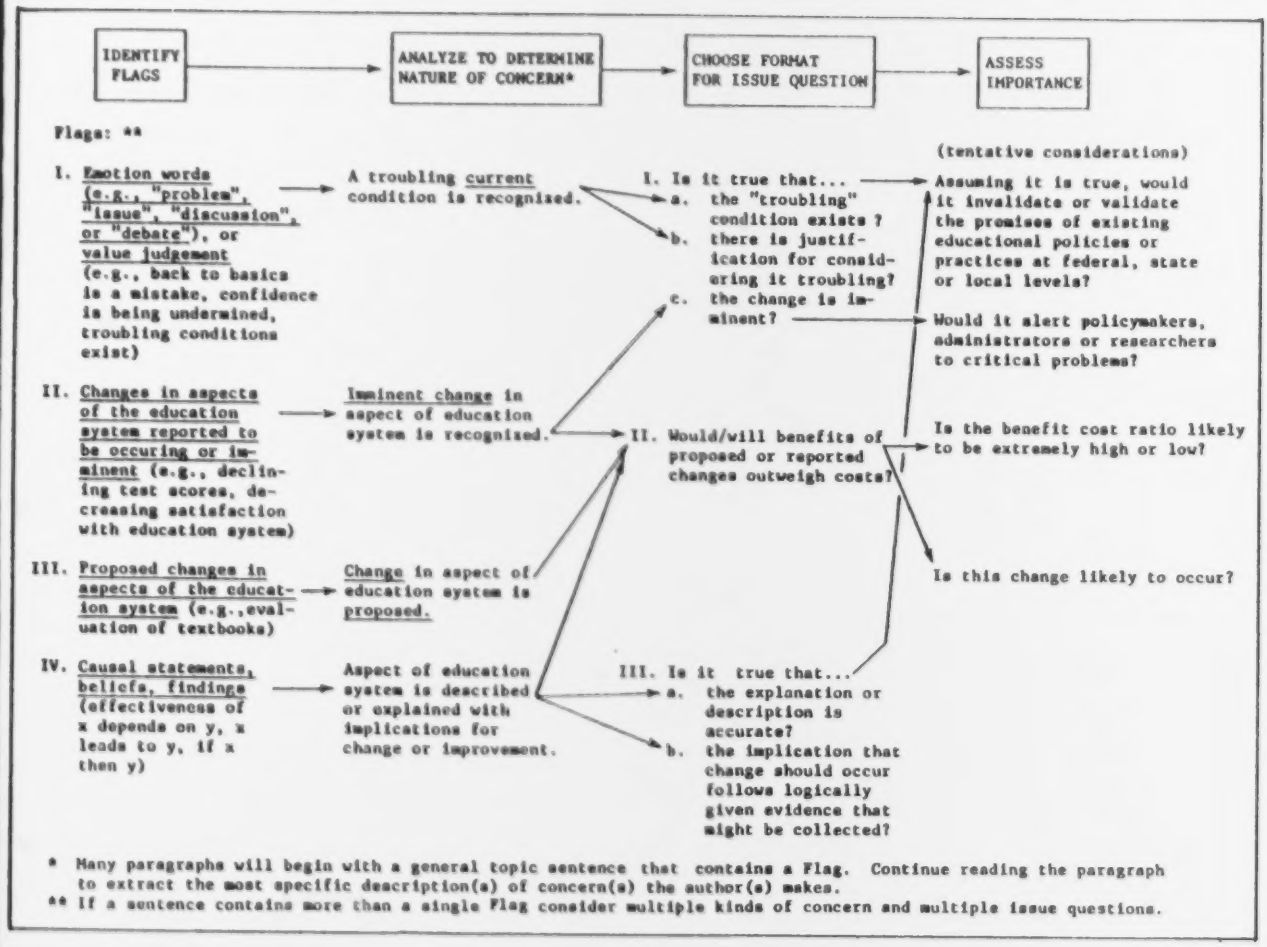
The issue identification process focused on a review of printed sources. To determine important written documents for this review, interviews were conducted with individuals active in the national policymaking arena. The following publications were identified as being key sources and were subsequently monitored by the project staff:

Education Daily
Harvard Educational Review
Phi Delta Kappan
Education U.S.A.
National Journal
Congressional Quarterly
Public Opinion
School Review

In view of the need for identifying current issues, as well as the large volume of material to be reviewed, the document monitoring was limited to the period between 1 June 1978 and 30 April 1979. Future replications of this effort might focus on a similar time period every two or three years to update the Center's issue-base for planning data collection and reporting activities.

Guidelines were developed to assist the staff in identifying issue material and formulating issue questions embodied in the documents. In particular, certain indicators were used to signal the presence of an issue question. These included (1) emotion words (e.g., "problem," "issue," "debate") or value judgments; (2) reports of current or imminent changes in aspects of the education system; (3) reports of proposed changes in aspects of the education system; and (4) the existence of causal statements, beliefs, or findings. The presence of any one of these indicators provided the basis for inspecting and analyzing the nature of the concern more closely. Following this analysis, a format was selected for the wording of the issue question. The entire process is displayed in Figure A-1 and can be considered to be the operational definition of an issue as used in this project.

After recording the issue question on an "issue card," the reader attempted to assign the issue to a specific location within a taxonomy. The purpose of this assignment was threefold. First, for many potentially important issues being identified, the taxonomy provided a


IDENTIFY FLAGS
ANALYZE TO DETERMINE NATURE OF CONCERN*
CHOOSE FORMAT FOR ISSUE QUESTION
ASSESS IMPORTANCE
Flags: **
(tentative considerations)
I. Emotion words (e.g., "problem", "issue", "discussion", or "debate"), or value judgement (e.g., back to basics is a mistake, confidence is being undermined, troubling conditions exist)
A troubling current condition is recognized.
I. Is it true that...
a. the "troubling" condition exists ?
b. there is justification for considering it troubling?
c. the change is imminent?
Assuming it is true, would it invalidate or validate the premises of existing educational policies or practices at federal, state or local levels?
Would it alert policymakers, administrators or researchers to critical problems?
II. Changes in aspects of the education system reported to be occuring or imminent (e.g., declining test scores, decreasing satisfaction with education system)
Imminent change in aspect of education system is recognized.
II. Would/will benefits of proposed or reported changes outweigh costs?
Is the benefit cost ratio likely to be extremely high or low?
III. Proposed changes in aspects of the education system (e.g., evaluation of textbooks)
Change in aspect of education system is proposed.
Is this change likely to occur?
IV. Causal statements, beliefs, findings (effectiveness of x depends on y, x leads to y, if x then y)
Aspect of education system is described or explained with implications for change or improvement.
III. Is it true that...
a. the explanation or description is accurate?
b. the implication that change should occur follows logically given evidence that might be collected?

* Many paragraphs will begin with a general topic sentence that contains a Flag. Continue reading the paragraph to extract the most specific description(s) of concern(s) the author(s) makes.

** If a sentence contains more than a single Flag consider multiple kinds of concern and multiple issue questions.

Figure A-1. Guide for identifying issues in documents.

convenient mechanism for charting the relationships among them. Second, assignment to the taxonomy afforded some further insight into the nature of the debate. Third, review of the issue cards in a part of the taxonomy supplied the reader with an overview of the current debates in that particular area of concern. The taxonomy for recording and indexing issues in documents is presented in Figure A-2.

An overview of the entire document review process appears in Figure A-3. It provides a listing of each of the steps followed by the readers.

Although the previously mentioned taxonomy provided a deductively developed categorization, it was recognized that an inductively-developed taxonomy would be more closely tied to current issues and concerns. Therefore, the staff followed the procedures listed below. It should be noted that these are a modification of guidelines set forth by Flanagan (1954, 1974) for analyzing critical incidents. (Indeed, the entire process of issue identification can be viewed as a modification of the critical incident technique.)

1. Select a general frame of reference.

2. Sort a sample of issue cards into a few piles in accordance with the selected frame of reference.

3. Formulate tentative headings for the major categories.

4. Sort additional issue cards into these major areas and setting up new subcategories as necessary. (During this process, all issue cards that were so similar that they would remain together regardless of changes in category definitions were clipped together and treated as one unit.)

5. Prepare tentative definitions for major headings and generalized issue questions for each of the main categories of issues.

6. Redefine major areas and issue questions as necessary while issue cards are being classified.

7. Have an independent check made on the classification of issue questions.

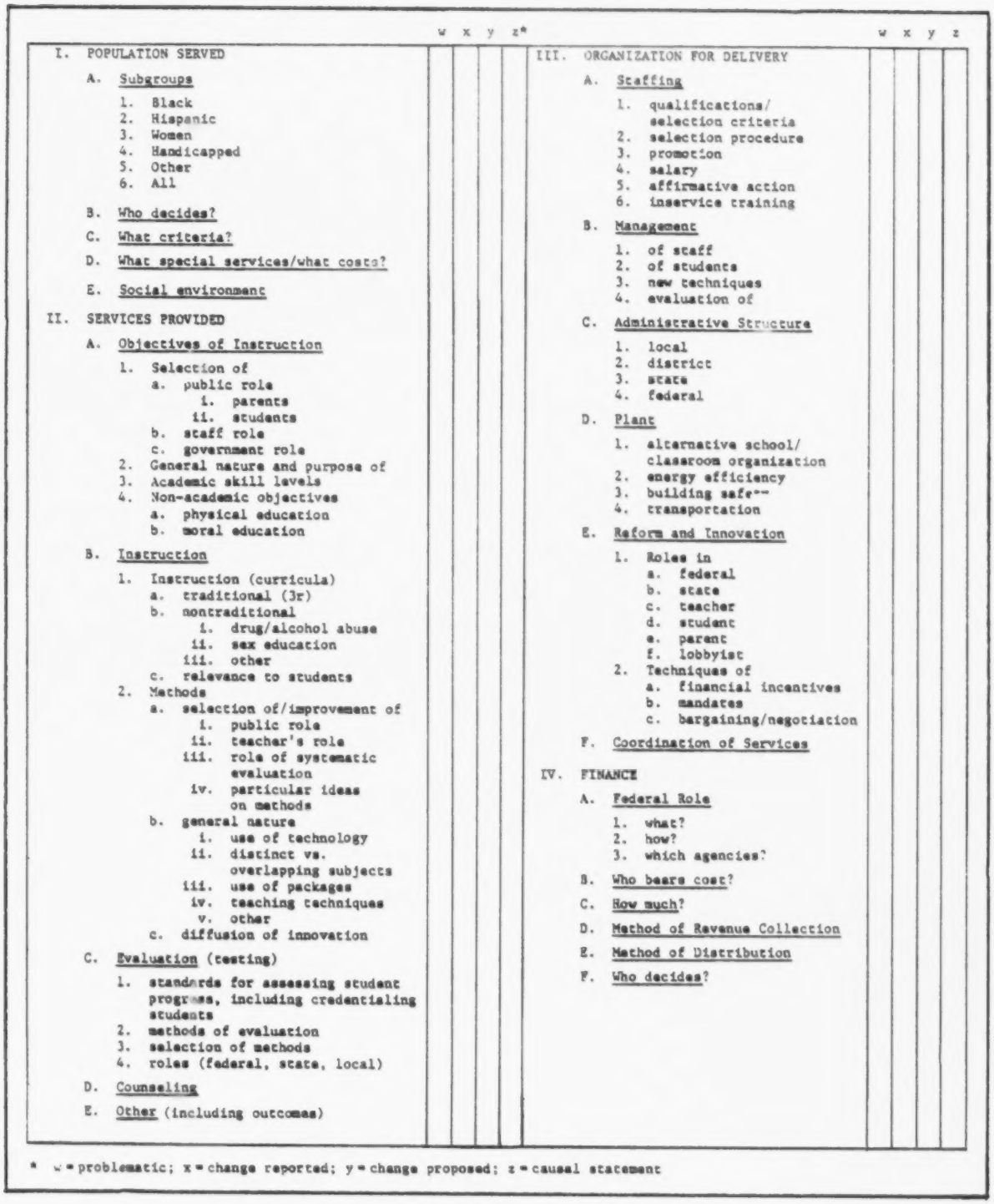
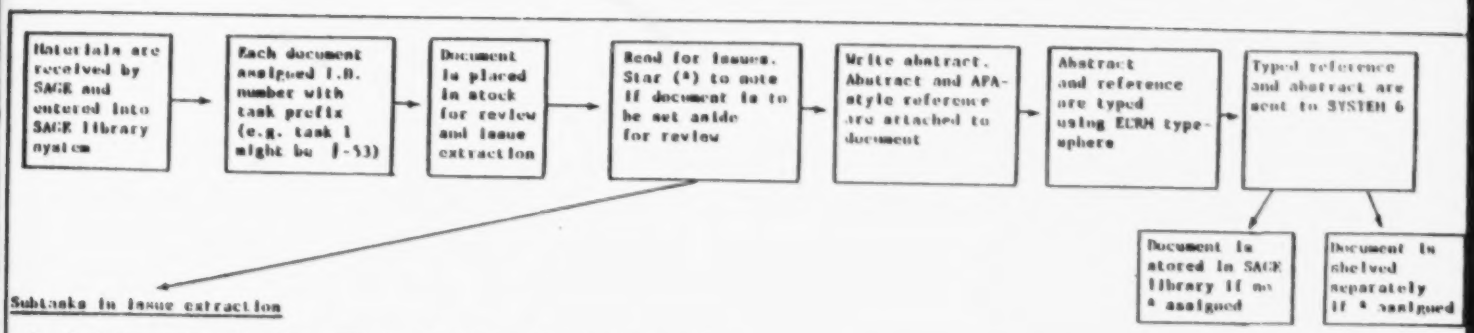


Figure A-2. Taxonomy for recording and indexing issues in documents.


Materials are received by SAGE and entered into SAGE library system
Each document assigned I.D. number with task prefix (e.g. task 1 might be J-53)
Document is placed in stock for review and issue extraction
Read for issues. Star (*) to note if document is to be set aside for review
Write abstract. Abstract and APA-style reference are attached to document
Abstract and reference are typed using ECRM typesphere
Typed reference and abstract are sent to SYSTEM 6
Document is stored in SAGE library if no * assigned
Document is shelved separately if * assigned

Subtasks in issue extraction

A. Read document looking for flags (see "guide for identifying issues").

B. Draw box around text containing statement of issue where flag occurs.

C. Identify flag type (e.g., A troubling condition is recognized, Imminent change recognized, change proposed, causal statement).

D. Using guide translate issue into standard format (e.g., Is it true that...?). If statement too vague see "E.3." below. Record issue-question and document number on filecard as in illustration.

E. Using taxonomy for recording issues (a portion of the form is illustrated below):
   1. Record document number on form.
   2. For each issue statement recorded (one per index card) write index card number in appropriate cell of taxonomy matrix.
   3. For issues too vaguely stated for explicit identification of cell assign to general category such as "Population Served." Translate into: "Is there evidence that _____ is problematic?"

F. Record issue-area code into card. For this example:

   Major category is IA. Population served; subgroups
   Minor category is 5. other.
   Type of issue is w. A troubling (problematic) condition is recognized.

   Therefore issue code is IA5 w.

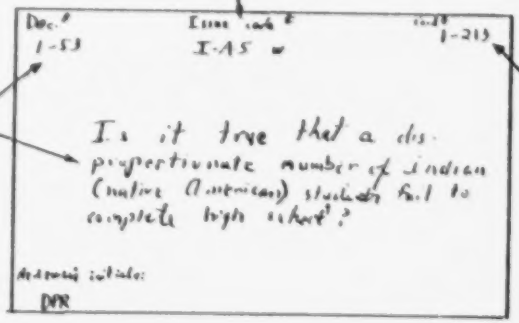
G. Continue through document identifying issues and translating them into common form, filling out the taxonomy form and index cards until the document is completed.

H. Decide if this document should be reviewed prior to drafting policy paper. If so put * on upper right hand corner of cover sheet for document which will have complete reference and abstract of it for typist.

I. Return document to shelf for typist with cover sheet attached.

J. File any index cards by issue codes.

K. File taxonomy forms by form number.


Doc.# J-53
Issue code IA5 w
J-213
Is it true that a disproportionate number of Indian (Native American) students fail to complete high school?
Research initials:
DPR

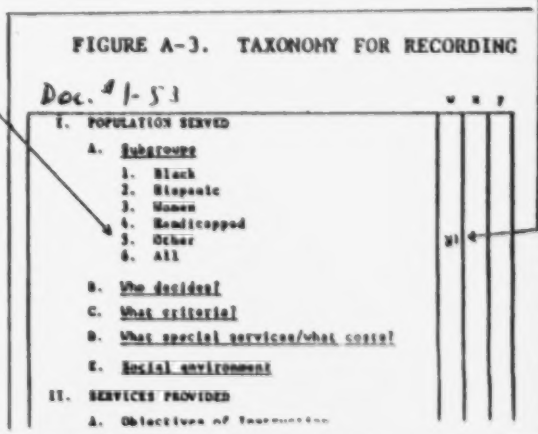


Figure A-3. Overview of document review.

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Establishing Priorities among Issues*

From the point of view of an educational policymaker, the relative usefulness of information addressing a particular issue is a function of the level of uncertainty about the issue (i.e., how uncertain the policymaker is about the answer to the question posed as the issue) and the perceived importance of knowing the answer to the question. These two factors make independent contributions to the level of priority of an issue.

Since policies are attempts to meet social needs, they should be based upon knowledge of the causes of these needs and confidence in proposed approaches to meeting these needs. Thus, one may expect that the perceived need for information in an issue area is inversely related to a decisionmaker's confidence that the causes and solutions of a problem are understood. Lack of confidence, which we call uncertainty, contributes greatly to a policymaker's appetite for information. All other factors held constant, the expected value of information contributing to an answer for an issue question increases directly with the level of uncertainty about the answer. One can think of a policymaker considering a set of alternative approaches to delivering a social service (e.g., mainstreaming handicapped students versus segregating them in a special school). The policymaker may be certain that one approach will be most effective; on the other hand, he or she may be uncertain as to the superiority of any one approach. In the latter case, information is needed if rational action is to be taken.

Priority will also vary as a function of the perceived importance of an issue. Four factors contribute to this assessment of importance: (1) the imminence of the events in that issue area impinging upon the decisionmaker; (2) the probability of change in policy or practice as

*Excerpts from D. Russ-Eft & D. Rubin, Establishing Priorities Among Issues in Education (Technical Report 5). Palo Alto, Calif.: American Institutes for Research, 1979.

a result of those events; (3) the scope of change; and (4) the sensitivity of the policy process to new information (or the probability that the direction of change can be influenced by information). All of these factors are included in what others have referred to as the timeliness and relevance of information (Caplan, 1977; Gilmartin & McLaughlin, 1977; Wholey et al., 1970).

Imminence refers to the time pressure surrounding the need for information. Many of the events that contribute to the development of educational policies are part of a relatively predictable agenda. The dates of reauthorization hearings or staff reviews of federal programs as the basis for new legislation are known well in advance. The schedule for legislative response to bills introduced by the administration is less certain, however, and other important events may occur with little warning (e.g., the passage of the Jarvis-Gann referendum, Proposition 13, in California). Nevertheless, the pressure of time in reacting to events in an issue area is likely to increase the importance of an issue and of information about that issue. It is essential, therefore, to estimate future deadlines. (It should be noted that the lead time for analyzing already collected data may be a few weeks or months, while the lead time for conducting a new survey may be a year or two.)

Upcoming events may call the attention of decisionmakers to a particular issue area; yet interest in new information may be relatively low because of a low probability of a change in policy or practice. Hearings may be scheduled, yet it may be known that existing policy will be continued. The expected attendance at such hearings will be low. In contrast, change in some other policy area may be very likely. Important events may have occurred that will require changes in existing practices. Dramatic budget cuts may be expected, or new interest groups may have formed that have disturbed the old alliances from which previous policies emerged. The greater the likelihood of change in policies or practices, the greater will be the importance of issues related to those policies or practices, and the greater will be the need for relevant information.

The scope of the expected change determines the likely importance of a change and, therefore, substantially affects the value of relevant information. Although the scope of change may have economic, political, and social ramifications, it can be considered in monetary terms. An expansion of an existing program or the development of a new one involves the costs of allocating new personnel, facilities, and materials to achieve the goals of the program. Conversely, the termination of a program may result in monetary savings to taxpayers, although the dislocation of those no longer employed in delivering services and the loss experienced by those no longer receiving services must be considered in calculating costs. The expected scope of change may also be conceived in terms of departures from established rationales for earlier policies and practices. While change in rationales may have small immediate monetary effects, such a change may indicate a future direction that will substantially transform programs and practices. For example, the emergence of an emphasis on competency-based exams may indicate a reallocation of resources from programs that are supportive of high-achieving students to programs that remediate learning problems of low-achieving students. Other factors being equal, the greater the scope of change in an issue area, the greater will be the importance of issues in that area and the value of information addressing those issues.

Finally, the likelihood that the direction of change can be influenced by information, or the sensitivity to information, is an important factor in establishing issue priorities. Sometimes a change in policy or practice is very likely. At the same time, it may be unlikely that new information will play a role in determining the nature of the change. For example, a new political coalition may shift majority opinion in Congress from favoring an existing program to favoring one particular modification of it. The change is likely, the scope of change is relatively broad, and the time pressure for making the change is great; however, the impact of new information will be attenuated. Where political forces seem already to have shaped the future, policymakers' needs for information will be reduced.

In similar circumstances, however, there may be a new block of undecided "voters." New problems in an issue area may have emerged, and old practices may hold no promise of solution. In such cases, the impact of new information may be amplified. A cogent report may "frame" or "set" a new problem-solving approach (Rein & White, 1977). Because the cogency of a report depends in part on its empirical validity, a coalition between policy and information experts can be particularly potent at this stage. Other factors being equal, as the predictability of change in policy or practice increases, the likelihood that information can influence the direction of change decreases.

To compare the priority of different issues, it is necessary to have a method for combining the factors into a single scale. This method must allow planners to select among various opportunities for contribution. Frequently, the choices will be among issues that are considered important on one factor but unimportant on others. Thus, a method for calculating the relative importance of factors or their tradeoffs is needed.

Unless the tradeoffs can be calculated fairly precisely and uniquely (e.g., on a valid "ratio" scale), any attempt to mechanize this process must be viewed as only providing tentative guidelines for planning. If the method merely provides a ranking of issues, for example, that will not be sufficient information to decide on resources to allocate to the highest priority issue, the next highest, and so on.

Arguments can be made that any one of the factors (uncertainty, imminence, probability of change, scope of change, and sensitivity) is the most important factor. Furthermore, the relative importance of the factors may vary dramatically for different issues at different times. To provide an estimation of the relative priority of issues and to illustrate the proposed method, a numerical assignment function has been developed to obtain a single priority rating for each issue.

Figure A-4 provides values for each of the factors. Refinement of the values is a task that will be accomplished together with the Center staff. As indicated, the numerical assignment function that is presented here is only a first approximation.

Priority Rating = Uncertainty x Imminence x Probability of Change x Scope of Change x Sensitivity

PR = (U)(I)(pC)(sC)(S)

It should be noted that different methods for combining factors can be included in this simple multiplicative model. First, differential weights (weighting imminence more than sensitivity, for example), can be simulated by widening the intervals between numerical values on some factors relative to others. For example, changing "imminence" values from 1, 2, and 3 to 1, 4, and 9, by squaring them, would effectively double the weight of this factor relative to others.* Second, for choices in which one alternative "dominates," or has a higher rating on all factors, the method of combining factors will be immaterial. Note that, in this multiplicative model, each of the factors can have a "zero" value (absolutely no imminence, no uncertainty, etc.). For issues with a zero value on one factor, the values on the other factors are irrelevant.

Much remains to be done to refine the quantitative aspects of this method, including analysis of actual decisions. We feel that this can be accomplished most efficiently through a joint effort of individuals at the Center and in SAGE.

*If $S=C_1C_2C_3C_4$, then $\log S=\log C_1 + \log C_2 + \log C_3 + \log C_4$; and squaring C_1 effectively doubles the weight applied to $\log C_1$.

Factors	Definitions of Values	Values
Uncertainty (U)	The need for information is great. Confidence in any one approach is low. Experts acknowledge much uncertainty.	3
	Some information is available and there is some consensus.	2
	Much persuasive information is available. Additional data will contribute only slightly to the precision of knowledge.	1
Imminence (I)	New legislation or regulations will be forthcoming this year. Clients are facing upcoming deadlines. A "hot" topic has emerged and although it doesn't yet appear on client agendas, it most certainly will.	3
	Issue will probably receive attention within the next two years.	2
	Issue does not now appear on client agendas, and there is no indication it will in the near future.	1
Probability of Change (pC)	Probability of change in policy or practice (to which issue is relevant) is great. Budget surpluses or deficits have occurred; important findings have changed rationales for existing policies. New political pressures will cause change.	3
	Probability of change is moderate. Indications are that existing policies or practices will be seriously investigated, and changes will be considered.	2
	Probability of change is small. No reason to expect different policies or practices than are already in place.	1
Scope of Change (sC)	Change would involve major social program or rationales for federal expenditure that will affect major programs in the future. Changes would be substantial in impact.	3
	Change would involve moderate-sized programs or rationales that might influence a small set of other programs. Impact of change would be moderate.	2
	Changes would involve social programs of relatively minor scope, or larger programs with changes being in the nature of marginal refinements.	1
Sensitivity to Information	New problems in issue area have arisen, and the consensus is that new solutions must be found. There is a bloc of influential, but as yet "undecided," persons receptive to new information. The need for a new "framework" for approaching policy decisions is recognized.	3
	Given persuasive new information, established views may be swayed. Policymakers will continue past policies if no new information is available, but they will consider new information should it emerge.	2
	Possible actions with respect to policies and practices to which issues are relevant are already predictable with high confidence. Political forces will dominate policymaking.	1

*Note on imminence: Time pressure may be very great in some issue areas, so great that most data collection methods would be too time-consuming to yield information when needed. Still, in this scheme, the issues would receive high weights on imminence. The issue would then be ranked high in priority. We feel that such ranking is appropriate. Managers making allocation decisions will recognize that only "quick and dirty" methods will yield timely results. They may choose or reject such methods based on an assessment of the expected value of the information; that is, the degree to which such information reduces uncertainty. After the events that create the time pressure have passed, the priority of the issue will be lowered.

Figure A-4. Factors and their values.

APPENDIX B

Results of Interviews with Educational Policymakers: A Step in the Development of an Issue Identification System for Educational Policies

In 1976, NCES awarded a contract to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop a system for the empirical determination of issues in postsecondary education.* Continuing and broadening this effort, NCES requested assistance in developing a procedure for identifying emerging policy issues related to elementary and secondary education as part of the contract with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) for the Statistical Analysis Group in Education (SAGE). As part of this task and under a subcontract with AIR, the Education Policy Research Institute (EPRI) of ETS conducted interviews with educational policymakers in order to identify key policy issues and how they come to the attention of policymakers.

Procedure

Individuals Interviewed

During the six-week period between October 2, 1978 and November 10, 1978, EPRI staff interviewed 15 individuals active in the national educational policymaking arena. These individuals were selected in consultation with NCES and AIR staff. Included among the interviewees were individuals representing various groups interested in education. There were five persons from the Executive branch, six from education interest groups, three from the Congress, and one from the media. The procedures and the findings are described below.

Interview Format

The semi-structured interviews followed a format developed by EPRI and AIR and approved by NCES. The discussions lasted from 45 minutes

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*Wild, C.L., Fortna R., & Knapp, J. Development of a system for the empirical deterimination of issues in postsecondary education: Final report of Task 1 (Vol. 1 & 2). Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1978.

to one hour with substantial variation in the amount and specificity of information obtained. Among the topics covered in each interview were:

Topic 1: The Various Approaches to Identifying Issues in Elementary and Secondary Education

(Rationale: The approaches might be integrated into the system developed for the Center.)

- How are they identified?
- Where do issues come from, and how do they emerge?

Topic 2: People with Whom Policymakers Interact

(Rationale: The responses will refine the list of people who might be contacted periodically as part of the system being developed.)

- To whom do policymakers talk?
- What specific individuals are especially well versed in educational policy concerns?

Topic 3: Documents Read by Policymakers

(Rationale: The responses will identify documents that the Center might monitor as part of the system.)

- What periodicals are read to "keep up" with elementary/secondary education issues?
- What documents would be read if time permitted?
- What documents should be reviewed to obtain an overview of emerging issues?
- What other sources of information are particularly valuable (e.g., government publications)?

Topic 4: Current and Emerging Issues in Elementary and Secondary Education

(Rationale: The responses will provide a validation of the document-reading method.)

- What are the key issues in education today?
- What are some issues that will become important in the future?

Topic 5: Policymakers' Expectations of NCES

(Rationale: The responses will help to identify rules for prioritizing issues, as inputs to the Center's planning process; the rules are part of the system being developed under this task.)

- What perceptions do policymakers have of the functions of NCES?
- How do they use NCES?
- How often do they use NCES?
- What activities and capabilities should NCES develop?

Findings

Before presenting the findings from these interviews, it should be recognized that these results are based on a very small sample that is not necessarily representative. It is impossible, therefore, to identify the extent to which the biases of one or two individuals may have influenced the results. These initial interviews were conducted to determine whether such a methodology could provide important insights into the educational policy process and, when refined and expanded, serve as a source for developing a model for issue identification within NCES.

Identification of Issues

Table B-1 presents the results on the questions dealing with the ways in which educational issues are formulated and identified. The interviews mentioned the importance of personal contacts, certain specific events, and various publications in this process.

Significant differences existed in how government and nongovernment policymakers identify policy issues. Several officials remarked that issue identification depended in large part on legislative expiration dates and budget schedules. All administrative

TABLE B-1

Ways in Which Educational Issues Are Formulated and Identified

Issues	Number of policymakers who mentioned
ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS THAT SHAPE THE POLICY PROCESS	
Actions of major interest groups and lobbists; concerns raised by members of interest groups	8
Legislative events; reauthorization, budget approval	6
"Something happens," e.g., Proposition 13	4
Lawsuits; court decisions	3
Presidential statements; administrative emphasis on certain issues	3
DHEW planning and budgeting process	1
OMB budget and budget planning	1
ACTIVITIES THROUGH WHICH RESPONDENTS IDENTIFY ISSUES	
Meetings where policy issues are discussed	5
Contact with people on the Hill	3
Debriefing by staff	3
Congressional hearings	2
Contact with representatives of interest groups	2
Contact with academics	1
PUBLICATIONS THROUGH WHICH RESPONDENTS IDENTIFY ISSUES	
Newspapers	3
Reports on research coming out of agencies; state surveys	2
Articles and comments in periodicals	1
NCES reports	1
Publications from major interests groups	1
Reports from Education Policy Research Centers	1

officials cited meetings with education organizations, interest groups, and congressional staff as vehicles for issue identification. One individual identified congressional hearings as an excellent source to pinpoint emerging interests.

While some nongovernment policymakers agreed that reauthorization and budget cycles dictated the emergence of issues, they also observed that issues emerged from their membership through annual meetings and political action committees. One interest group offical remarked:

> The reauthorization schedule sets the broad framework for emerging policy issues. That is, we know that in the next year higher/postsecondary issues are going to be important, because the authorizing legislation will expire. However, the specific issues within the broad realm of postsecondary education that are of particular interest to our organization will emerge from our annual meeting and recommendations from our groups at the state level.

Other individuals cited presidential statements and policies and periodicals published by interest groups as valuable sources for issue identification.

One individual cautioned that "education is very trendy" with current events dictating issues. He claimed most educators do not really have ideas, so the few who do are able to dominate with relative ease. This, he said, is especially the case with specific areas of educational concern--for example, career education and lifelong learning--that tap an important and current public interest.

People with Whom Policymakers Interact

Federal policymakers reported that they interact with the following professionals to acquire information on critical issues: (1) congressional and executive branch staffs, (2) elected and appointed officials, (3) program staff in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) and the Office of Management and Budget, (4) representatives of interest groups, and (5) consultants in "think-tanks" (e.g., Education Policy Research Centers), foundations, and universities. In addition, the interviewees identified specific individuals likely to be especially well versed in educational policy

concerns. A partial listing of people and groups with whom policymakers interact appears in Table B-2. It includes only those who were mentioned by two or more policymakers.

Of interest in this initial interview effort was the failure of policymakers to identify specific reporters as critical to issue identification, despite their heavy reliance on print dailies for information. In addition, few scholars were cited as good information sources. One representative comment came from a government official:

> I guess I'd include [James] Coleman primarily because of his reputation. There aren't really any other researchers that come to mind as being people I really count on for information--most of the stuff academics do is too theoretical or too dated by the time I get it to be of any real use in policy decisions.

Documents Read by Policymakers

Table B-3 provides a listing of the documents mentioned by these policymakers. Many of the individuals who were interviewed read Education Daily, Higher Education Daily, the Washington Post, and the New York Times regularly. Other periodicals reviewed by a substantial number of interviewees include: Chronicle of Higher Education, Change, Harvard Educational Review, and Phi Delta Kappan. Also mentioned were various educational organization newsletters, political news sheets, and periodicals. Some individuals stressed the importance of reading The Wall Street Journal and the financial pages of other newspapers. One person claimed intelligent demands of government cannot be made without first understanding the nation's economy. Books were mentioned as not being particularly valuable sources of information. One government official commented:

> I don't read books anymore, I just don't have the time. My staff reads anything that's really relevant in their area and then they may provide me with a summary, but this doesn't happen very often. I guess I'd have to say that very few individual books have a direct and immediate impact on the policy process.

TABLE B-2

People and Groups with Whom Policymakers Interact*

Name	Affiliation
CONGRESSIONAL AND WHITE HOUSE STAFF	
John Jennings	Counsel, Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, House Committee on Education and Labor
Jean Frohlicher	Counsel, Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Elizabeth Abramowitz	Assistant Director, Education and Women's Issues, White House Domestic Policy staff
Bertram Carp	Deputy Director, White House Domestic Policy staff
Gregory Fusco	Minority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Franklin Zweig	Professional staff member, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS	
Michael Kirst	Chairman, California State Board of Education; formerly with the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW)
Gregory Anrid	State Commission of Education, Massachusetts
John Brademas	Majority Whip, House of Representatives
PROGRAM AND MANAGEMENT STAFF	
Marshall Smith	Assistant Commissioner for Policy Studies, USOE, DHEW
Michael Timpane	Deputy Director for Policy, National Institute of Education (NIE), DHEW
Ernest Boyer	U.S. Commissioner of Education
John Evans	Assistant Commissioner for Evaluation and Dissemination, USOE, DHEW
Michael O'Keefe	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, DHEW
Albert Alford	Assistant Commissioner for Legislation, USOE, DHEW
---	Office of Management and Budget staff
REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERESTS GROUPS	
Samuel Halperin	Director, Institute for Educational Leadership, The George Washington University
Fred Hechinger	President, The New York Times Company Foundation, Inc.
Betsy Levin	Professor of Law, Duke University
William Pierce	Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers
---	Forum of Education Associations (sponsored by USOE, DHEW)
---	National Education Association
CONSULTANTS IN "THINK TANKS," FOUNDATIONS, AND UNIVERSITIES	
Joel Berke	Senior Research Scientist, Education Policy Research Institute of Educational Testing Service; former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Development, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education (ASE/PD), DHEW
James Coleman	Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago
Christopher Cross	Director, Washington Office, and Director of Policy Analysis, Abt Associates; formerly Minority Staff Director, House Committee on Education and Labor
Paul Hill	Director, Center for Educational Finance and Governance, Rand Corporation; former Director, NIE Compensatory Education Study
Harold Howe II	Vice-President, Ford Foundation; former U.S. Commissioner of Education
Francis Keppel	Director, Aspen Institute Program in Education for a Changing Society and Senior Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education, former U.S. Commissioner of Education
David Riesman	Henry Ford II Professor of Social Sciences, Harvard University; Advisory Member, Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education
Thomas Thomas	Director, Center for the Study of Social Policy, SRI International

Table B-3

Publications Read by Policymakers

Issue	Number of policymakers who mentioned
NEWSPAPERS AND NATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINES	
Washington Post	9
New York Times	6
Wall Street Journal	4
Washington Star	2
New Republic	1
Newsweek	1
Time	1
Saturday Review	1
BOOKS, GOVERNMENT REPORTS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS	
NIE, NCES, and other government agency reports	3
Congressional testimony	1
Public Policy and Private Higher Education (by David W. Breneman & Chester E. Finn, Jr. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1978)	1
OTHER PERIODICALS	
Education Daily	11
Higher Education Daily*	6
"Several interest group newsletters'	5
Chronicle of Higher Education*	4
Change*	4
Harvard Educational Review	4
Phi Delta Kappan	4
Education U.S.A.	3
National Journal	3
Barron's Report	2
Congressional Quarterly	2
Public Opinion	2
NEA newsletters	2
School Review	2
American Educator	1
Compact	1
Education and Work	1
Educational Researcher	1
Federal Register	1
Higher Education and National Affairs	1
Investment Counseling	1
Public Interest	1
School Boards Journal	1
Social Policy	1
Teacher's College Record	1

*These publications are concerned primarily with higher education, not with elementary and secondary education.

Current and Emerging Issues

The complete listing of issue areas identified from the interviews appears in Table B-4. It should be noted that government officials differed from interest group representatives in their identification of emerging issues. Those identified by the interest group officials reflected organizational interests and were, therefore, more narrowly focused. For example, one interest group representative noted that specific tax regulations are a pressing concern, while another identified the development of national sports competitions as a central matter at the present time.

Government policymakers defined emerging issues in a broader sense, agreeing on the following as important:

- o school finance reform
- o minimal competency; basic skills; competency-based testing
- o tuition tax credits
- o spending and tax limitations (such as Proposition 13)
- o delivery of educational services and the federal role in this regard

Race and sex discrimination were mentioned by a few government and nongovernment policymakers as important educational concerns. Various education organization policymakers thought that the creation of a new Department of Education with cabinet-level representation was an issue and, in view of its recent defeat, likely to remain at least a "background issue." Two government officials mentioned concerns involving the complex web of categorical programs and possible efforts to reform the existing grant-in-aid delivery system.

One education organization official claimed that, while school violence and vandalism and minimal competencies are discussed by policymakers, they are in the "operative stage" and should no longer be identified as "issues." This individual also felt that minimal competencies, with the exception of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), are a state problem and that the federal government has no business getting involved.

Table B-4

Issues Mentioned in Elementary and Secondary Education

Issues	Number of policymakers who mentioned
EDUCATION FINANCE	
School finance reform/equity; equalization	9
Tuition tax credits	5
Spending and tax limitations; property tax reform; national movement for tax relief (e.g., Proposition 13	3
Tax regulations, especially regarding charitable donations	1
Fraud and abuse	1
High costs of education	1
Reduced federal financial resources	1
Reauthorization	1
Collective bargaining	1
FEDERAL ROLE	
Department of Education	4
Federal role in education	3
Overlapping categorical programs	2
Excessive paperwork burden	2
Grant delivery system	2
Federal targeting/lack of information on special populations (e.g., bilingual, handicapped)	1
Consolidation of programs	1
Supplementing vs. supplanting	1
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY	
Desegregation, race discrimination	4
Civil rights regulations and enforcement	2
Handicapped children	1
Misclassification of special children	1
Sex discrimination	1
BASIC COMPETENCIES	
Minimal competencies; basic skills; competency-based testing	7
Declining test scores	2
National testing	1
Lack of confidence in public schools and other public institutions	1
Surplus college degrees/college and work	1
Standards	1
Curriculum	1
OTHER ISSUES	
Welfare of private schools	2
Bilingual education	1
Declining enrollments	1
National sports competitions	1
Parental involvement	1
Teacher supply and demand	1

Both interest group representatives and government policymakers found it easier to specify current policy issues rather than those that might be emerging. In the words of one government official:

> Most educational policy changes are initiated outside the educational system. People tend to forget that it's events like the cold war, the War on Poverty, Supreme Court decisions and the like that really generate education policy issues. If the Russians launch another Sputnik, education is likely to become a real big concern....It's just incredibly difficult to predict what issues are going to emerge in the next few years.

Future Directions

Although only a limited number of interviews were conducted, a wealth of information was gained about what issues education policymakers consider significant, how they obtain information, and how they view NCES. The willingness of these policymakers to participate in the interviews was important in helping to determine whether or not the interview strategy would be a useful component of an issue identification.

As stated in the original proposal and workplans for SAGE, additional interviews with federal officials and experts in elementary and secondary education will occur during the development of the system. These interviews will take place in the spring of 1979, following the preparation of a statement on issues in elementary and secondary education based on a document-review method. The purpose of these interviews will be to validate, as well as elaborate, the results obtained from these interviews and from the document review. Details on the interview objectives and the proposed sample will be included in a future report.